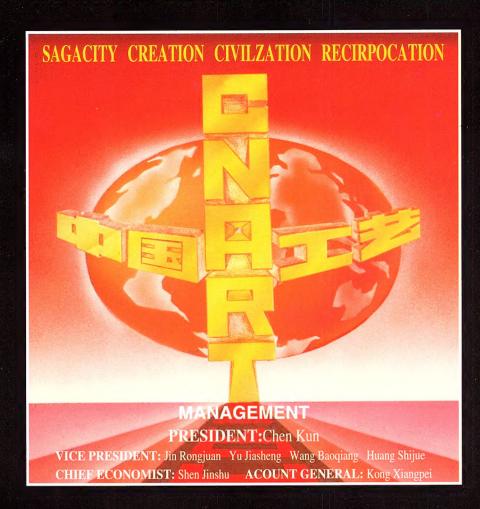


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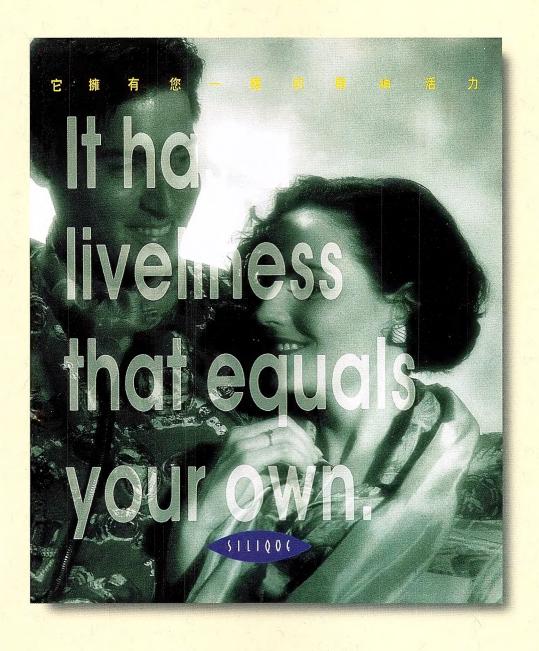
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The Three Gorges: Resettling the People and Rearranging the Land

Photos & Article by Xie Guanghui

The Yangtse River was dammed at the Three Gorges on November 8, 1997, which means that the construction of the world's largest water conservancy project has entered a new stage. What will happen to the people who live in the area? How much will the historical sites and scenic spots be affected? Our correspondent tells what he saw there.



PHOTOGRAPHY

The Crazy Dancing Dragon

Photo by Yip Man Leung







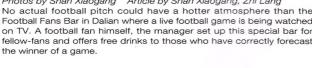
Experiencing the Holiness of Lake Namco

Photos by Guo Ji, Wang Jian Article by Su Zhen Namco, the world's highest lake, is holy to the Tibetans. Lying on the roof of the world at an altitude of 5,000 metres above sea level, the lake looks like a gem imbedded among the snow-capped peaks. Either because of its breath-taking beauty, or because of the thin air, visitors who see it always feel their heartbeat speeds up.



Football Fans Bar in Dalian

Photos by Shan Xiaogang Article by Shan Xiaogang, Zhi Lang No actual football pitch could have a hotter atmosphere than the Football Fans Bar in Dalian where a live football game is being watched on TV. A football fan himself, the manager set up this special bar for fellow-fans and offers free drinks to those who have correctly forecast

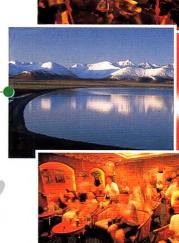




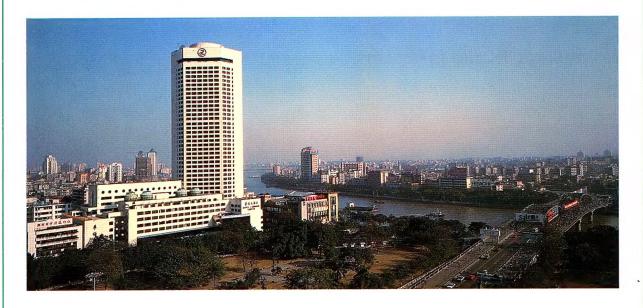
Masterpiece of Art – Chaozhou Embroidered Tapestries

Photos by Huang Yanhong Article by Zhi Lang





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CITY PROFILE

Lanzhou – a City on the Yellow River

Photos by Shi Baoxiu Article by Gloria Shang, He Xiaozu
Though it is considered as a northwestern city, Lanzhou is in fact located at the centre of the Chinese territory. The Yellow River which runs through it enhances the charm of the scenery, and its position on the ancient Silk Road has left it a rich cultural legacy.



Spend Spring Festival in the Nujiang River Valley

Photos & Article by Li Zhixiong

The minority ethnic groups living in the Nujiang River Valley in the Southwest celebrate the Chinese New Year in a unique way. Visiting the area during this festival season you will obtain very special experience: attending weddings, practising archery and taking a communal bath in the hot springs....



Shing Mun Park – a Green Museum, Hibiscus Hill – a Sacred Retreat

Photos & Article by Yuan Zhu



HIGHLIGHTS

Skiing Holiday in Northeast China

Photos & Article by Shan Xiaogang
In the Northeast, you may find well-equipped skiing resorts. And the Windmill Villa makes you feel as if you were living in Europe.



The Bai in Yunnan

Article by Iris Wong

One of the Chinese ethnic minorities living in Southwest China, the Bai people have a colourful culture of their own.

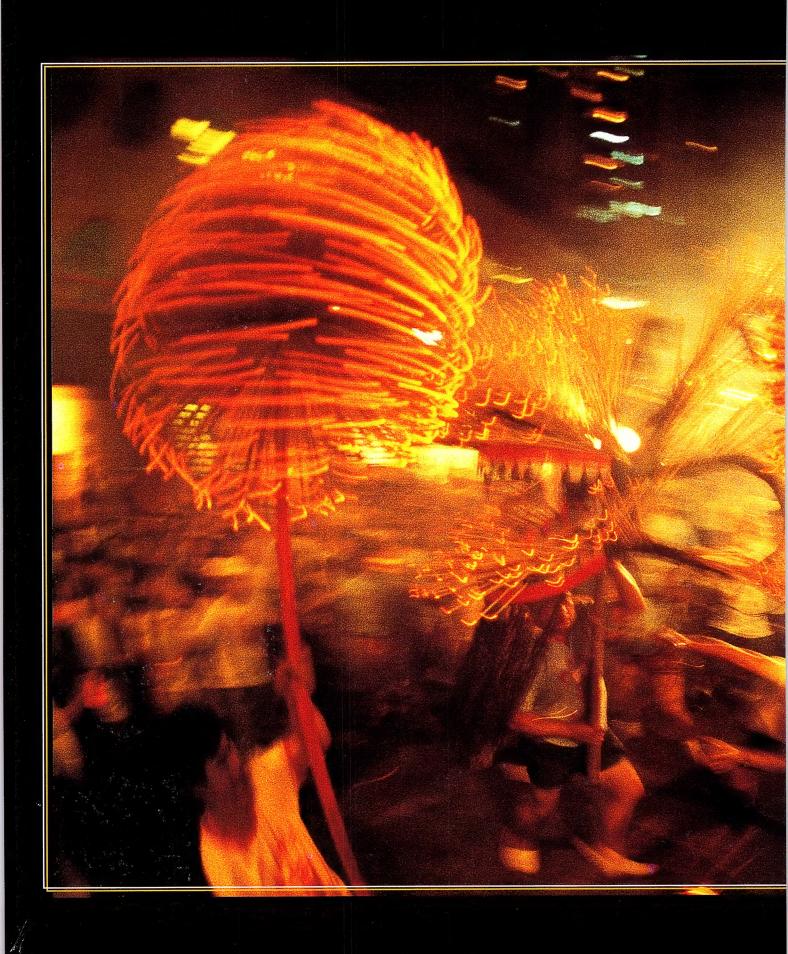


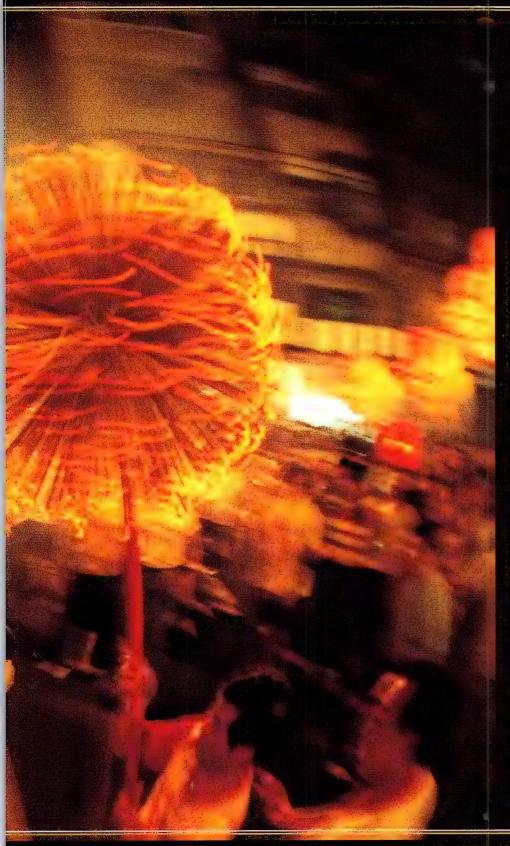
Cover: Rafting down the Yangtze River at the Three Gorges



NEXT ISSUE







PHOTOGRAPHY

The Crazy Dancing Dragon

Photo by Yip Man Leung

Every year during the Mid-Autumn Festival, the residents of Tai Hang in Hong Kong celebrate the Moon Festival in an elaborate way: for three nights, the fire dragon performs a dance on the streets, and it is believed that the celebration can bring peace and prosperity to the neighbourhood.

The scene is magnificent, but it is very difficult to shoot a good picture of it. As the background is dark and the subject is moving, it requires high expertise. First of all, the photographer must use a high-speed film and a large-aperture lens. But this is not enough. In addition to using a slow shutter, an experienced photographer would also move together with the dancing dragon while clicking his camera. Only in this way can he catch the dragon's brilliant, moving image. Another point worth mentioning is that the photographer should choose an advantaged dark position first. Without a dark drop, the brilliance of the fire dragon would not be well reflected.

Estimated data: 135 camera, wide angle lens 20mm; colour slide ISO 800-1600; aperture: 2.8; shutter: 1/15 second.



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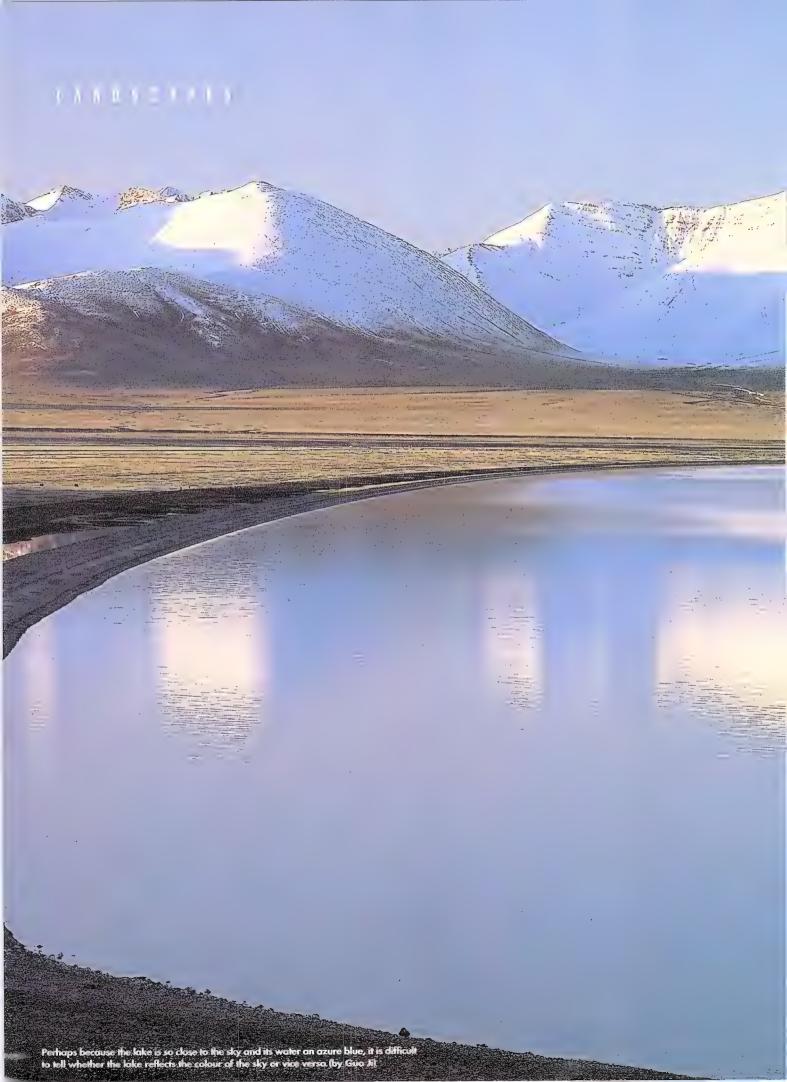
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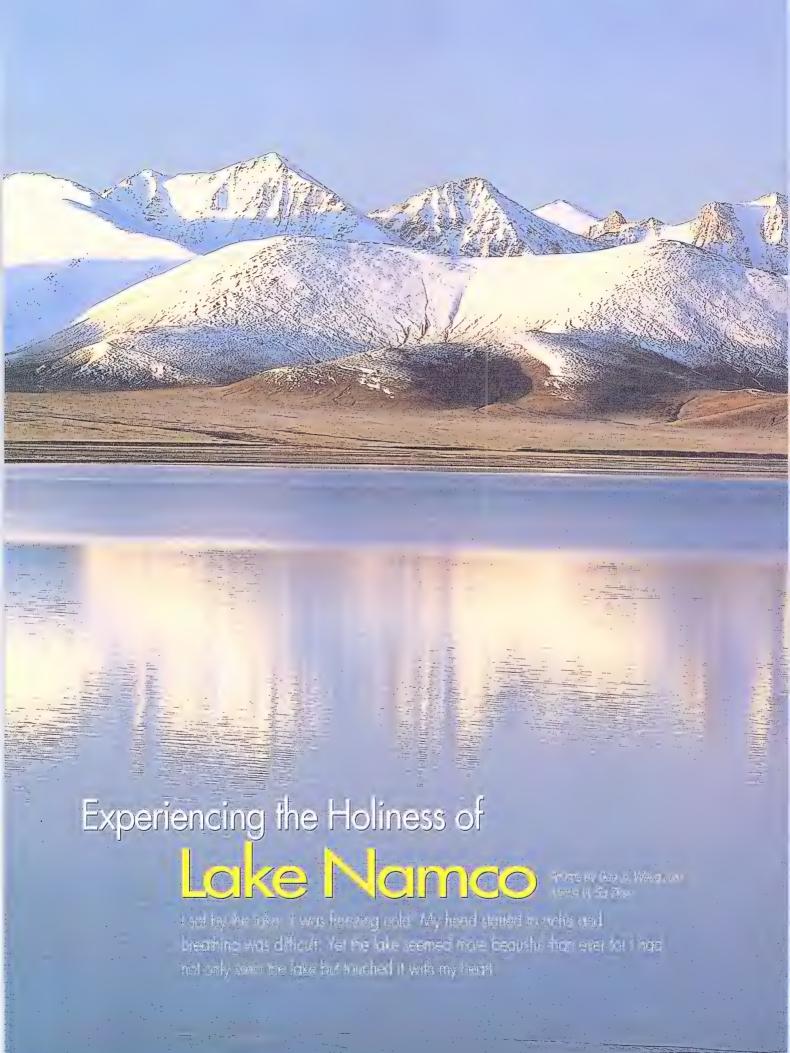
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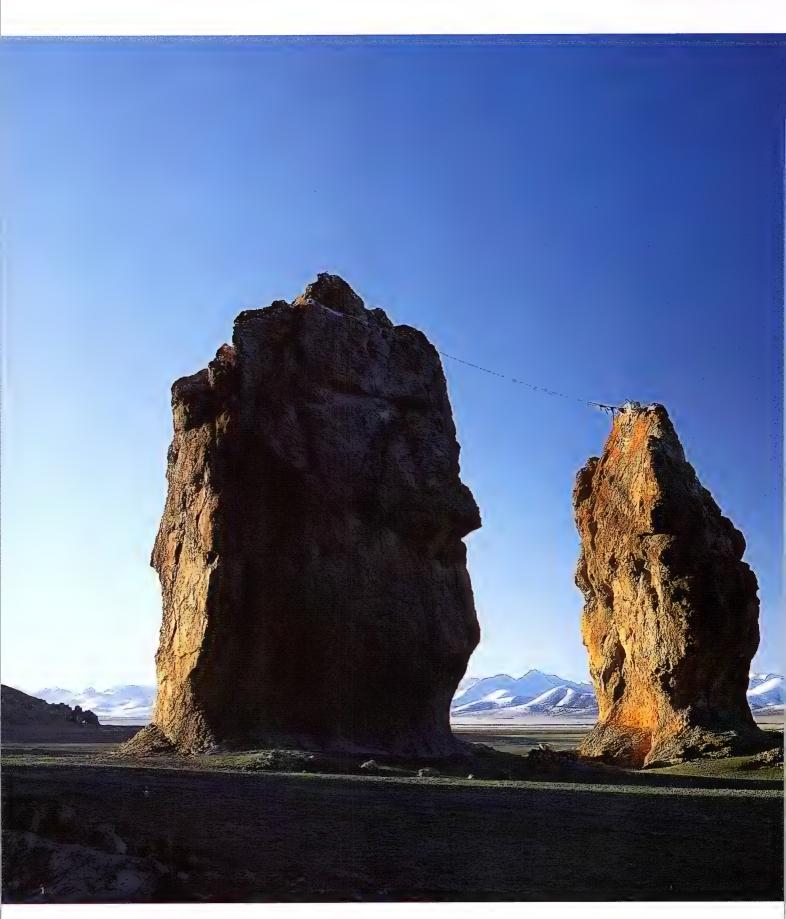
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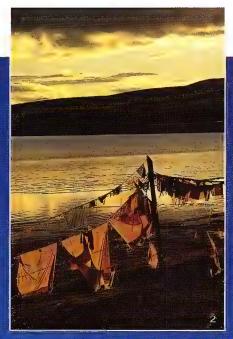








- 1. The two strange rocks, hallmark of Lake Namco (by Guo Ji)
 2. With every Mani pile one sees, a mysterious feeling fills one's heart (by Lin Shuhou)
 3. Mani stone piles on the Tashi Peninsula on Lake Namco (by Wang Jian)



I have long been told that it's not an easy drive on the road to Namco. It takes four or five hours to cover the distance of a few dozen kilometres. At some points, the car has to wade through streams and once it breaks down, you will have to get out of the car, climb the mountain on foot and push the car along into the bargain. At such high altitude, you burn yak dung to keep warm, that is if you can find some ... It really sounded like I would be looking for trouble. So I said to myself: Forget it! I'm not going there.

But then, Namco is one of the highest lakes in the world. It is China's second largest salt-water lake and one of Tibet's three major holy lakes. How could I not go? I finally convinced myself. "To hell with it!" I said. And I went.

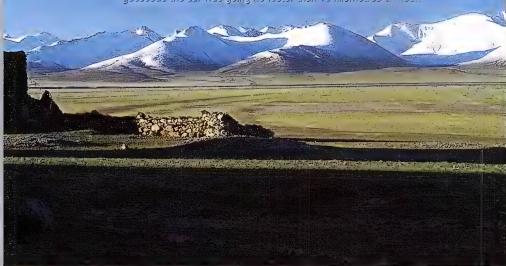
No Fun Cheering at 5,000 Metres

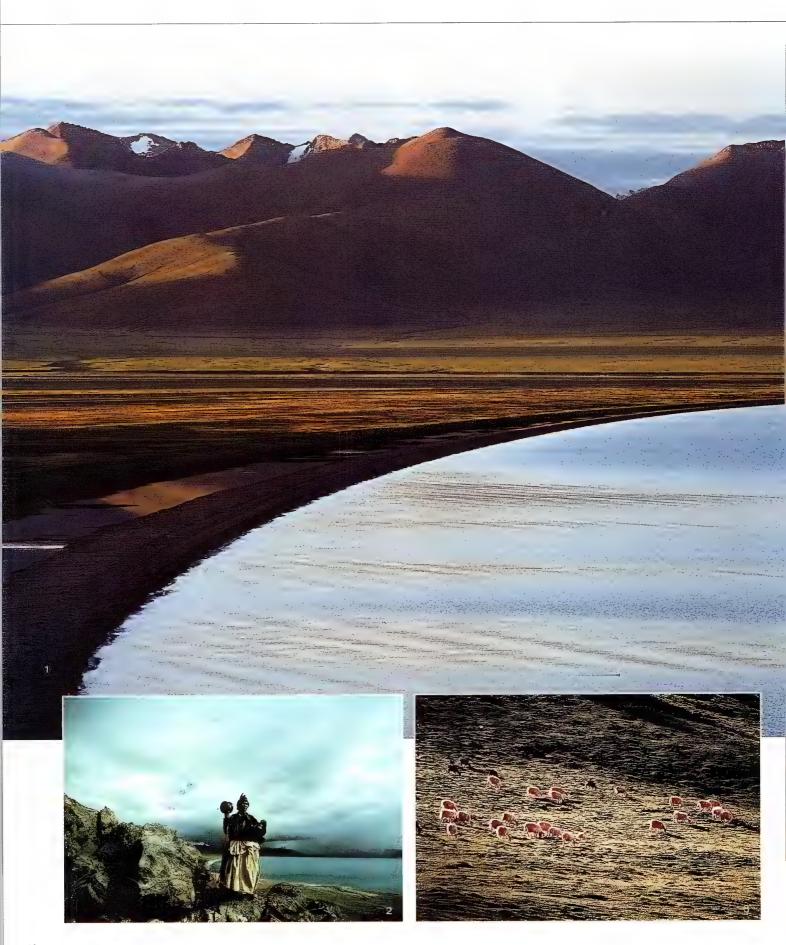
We left Lhasa at seven in the morning. By the time we arrived at Damxung, it was past eleven. After lunch, we headed directly for Lake Namco. The road was indeed rough. We were being tossed up and down like in a boat and I was almost feeling "seasick". Our rears started to ache from the bumping. Then we came to a slope. The car, as if overtaken by altitude sickness too, had not the power to climb, so we had to get out and walk. On the plateau, breathing is difficult even when you're immobile. Now we had to climb the mountain on foot! At last, we reached Nagen Pass and there, far in the distance, was Lake Namco, its waters shimmering in the sun, a sparkling piece of sapphire. We burst into cheers, realising immediately that we shouldn't have done that for we were over 5,000 metres above sea level and we had difficulty breathing as it was. We were inhaling strenupusly.

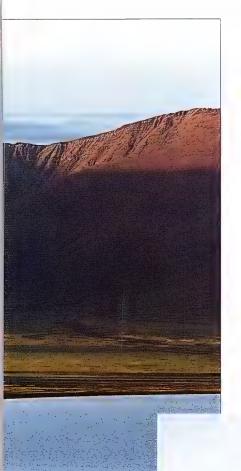
But the sapphire had mesmerised us. Our only wish was to get to it as quickly as possible.

So Hard to Reach Though It Seemed So Near

After descending from the mountain, we found ourselves on a swampy mud road in the grassland. The 'road' was actually the tracks left by earlier travellers. Our car drove on and on. The lake seemed to be within reach, but somehow we could never really approach it. We urged the driver to step on the gas and dash for it, but negotiating the muddy road was no easy task. We were thrown up and down like in a raging current and that was no fun at such high altitude. I felt my pulse accelerating. The altitude reaction was again taking hold. At this point, I guessedd the car was going no faster than 10 kilometres an hour.







Ahead, a stream about five metres wide meandered from the snowy mountain to the lake. The car had to wade through the water to get across. Being not of very good quality, the engine died as soon as the car drove in. Oh, my Goodness! This meant that we had to push the car across. It was all right for the women, for they were exempted from the chore. I couldn't help wishing I belonged to the opposite sex.

Soon we came to a cross road. Which way to go? We tossed a coin and could only pray to the Goddess of Lake Namco that she would not close its door on us.

Blue As the Sky

At last we arrived at the Little Stone House on the lake shore, the Mecca for pilgrims who come to pay homage to the holy lake. Two huge rocks, more than 50 metres tall, stood facing each other by the lake – a rather strange sight – but to me, there was something sacred about them for they did resemble the joined hands of a lama in prayer. I strolled down to the lakeside to have a closer look at the water of the world's highest lake. It was crystal clear.

Perhaps because it is so close to the sky, it is difficult to say whether the azure blue water of the lake reflects the colour of the sky or vice versa. If it weren't for the snowy mountain that stands in the way, one could hardly tell where the sky ends and the lake begins.

Being one of the three biggest holy lakes of Tibet, Namco is surrounded by Mani stone piles put up by the pilgrims, each pile representing a wish, a thousand piles representing a thousand wishes... I piled a stone slab up too, wishing that the Goddess of Lake Namco would let all the pilgrims' wishes come true.

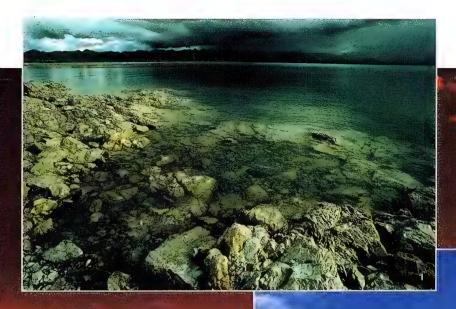
Taking One Breath For Every Two Steps

There was a small hill behind the Little Stone House. I decided to climb to the top for a panoramic view. I had barely started when I was puffing like a cow. Here I was trying to climb a hill at 4,700 metres above sea level, supported by only half of the oxygen provided at zero level. I tried to keep my breathing steady, taking one breath every two steps (inhale...two steps...exhale...two steps...inhale...). As the breathing became more regular, my heart felt somewhat relaxed. At last, I reached the top. I had no idea how high the hill was, nor how long it took me to climb it. But I did count the number of steps I took and it turned out to be 372 steps, for which I had breathed 186 times.

From the top of the hill, I viewed Lake Namco lying peacefully at my feet. The thought of standing above the highest lake in the world gave me a heavenly feeling.

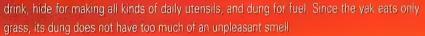
- All is quiet and still on the Lake, giving one a sense of spaciousness (by Lin Nuhou)
- Devoted followers of Lamaism circling the Lake with prayer wheel in hand, praying for the cleansing of their souls (by Wang Miao)
- Sheep returning from the grazing ground at Nyainqêntanglha Mountain Pass (by Wang Jian)
- 4. A more lively side of the otherwise calm and quiet Lake Namco (by Lin Jinghua)





Packed Sardines

We spent the night in the Little Stone House which consisted of two rooms totalling less than 10 square metres in size. More than 20 people were packed in there, allowing only half a square metre to each person. In the room to the right, there was a small stove, burning yak dung, providing warmth and hot water. As one of the precious possessions of the Tibetan Plateau, the yak provides meat for food, milk for



I slept in the room to the left. It was terribly crowded and I just couldn't find the right position to lie down. Either my hand was on my neighbour's head or his foot rested on my back. One's breathing tends to accelerate when lying flat on one's back at this altitude, and when that happens, symptoms of altitude sickness appears. As it was extremely cold, I had to cover myself with a thick quilt, which was so heavy that I could hardly breathe, but even this could not help much to ward off the cold. Falling to fall asleep after a while, I decided to get up and go outside.

All Quiet and Still in the Universe

I looked up and found that the night sky on the plateau sparkled with myriads of glittering stars, which seemed to be winking at me in welcome with typical Tibetan hospitality. The moon seemed to be smiling down at me, too. Whereas in the cities, the moon's light is overshadowed by the light shed by street lamps, here the moon is like a huge light bulb illuminating the whole earth, silhouetting its every contour. At that moment, silence reigned supreme. Braving the biting cold wind, I walked up to the shore of the lake. I closed my eyes to listen to the music of its water and to feel with my soul its beauty...

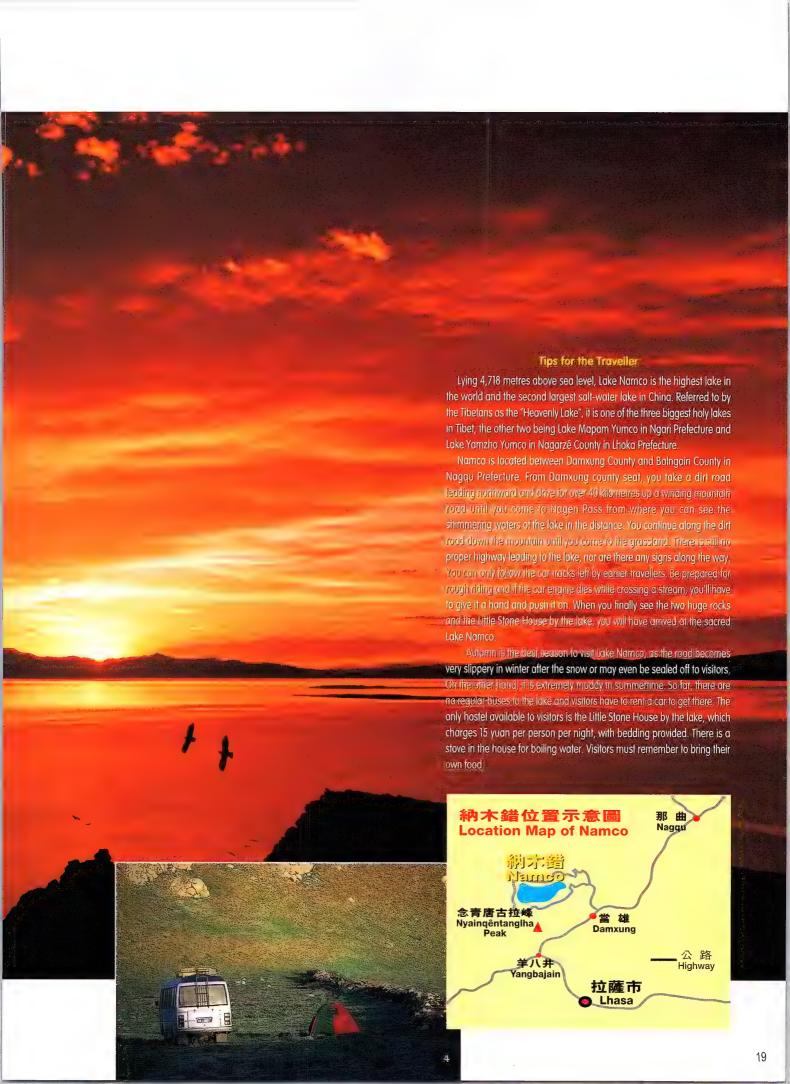
I sat myself down. It was freezing cold. My head started to ache and breathing was difficult. Yet, the lake seemed more beautiful than ever for I had not only seen the lake but touched it with my heart.

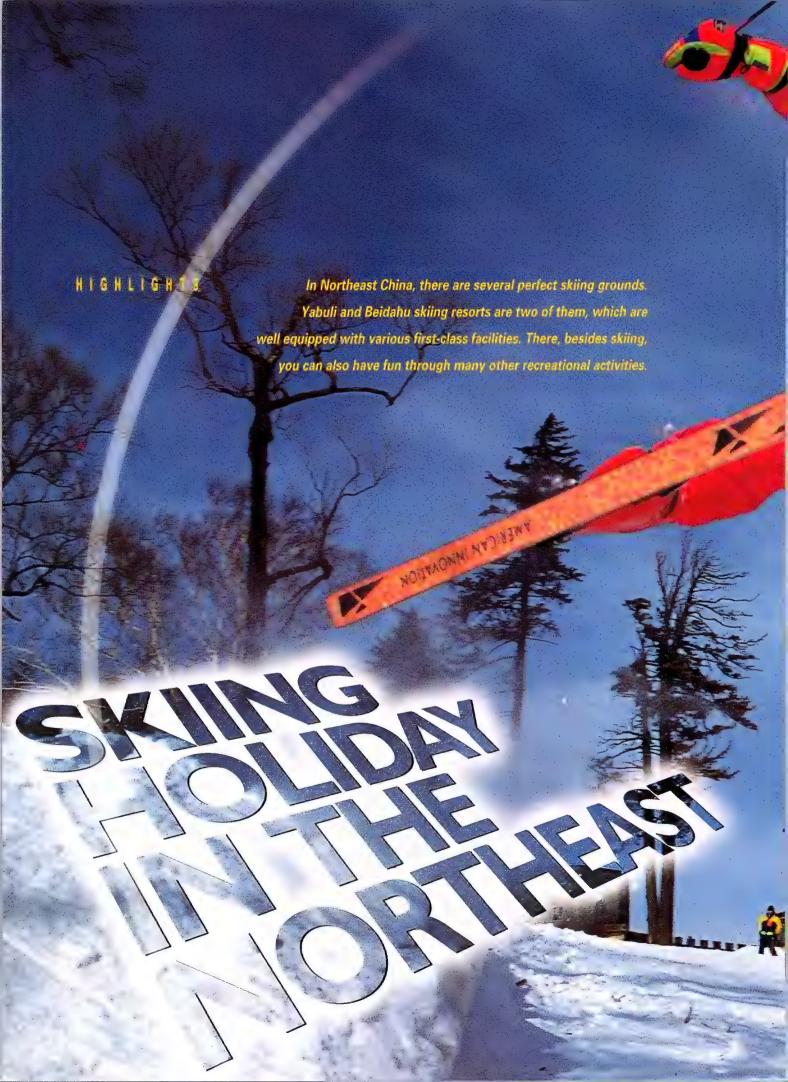


^{2.} Awesome rocks on the lakeshore (by Guo Ji)

^{3.} Lake Namco at sunset (by Chu Xiaoqing)

^{4.} Camping on the plateau provides a unique experience (by Zhang Xiaoquan)







EARNINGTO

While talking about skiing, one naturally thinks about the snow-covered mountain slopes and forests, where handsome and brave Skimeisters show their skills. Many might dream of having such an experience.

When I heard that heavy snow had fallen frequently this year in Northeast China, which had been afflicted so long with a severe drought, I decided immediately that I should go skiing there. I flew to Harbin, and then changed for a bus, which took me to Yabuli after two

and half hours' drive on the expressway. Yabuli is so far the largest skiing ground with the best facilities in China. I stayed at Fengche Mountain Village, where the simple, elegant log cabins were built in European style. The

snow-covered mountain stood imposingly on the north side like a huge wave on the sea, with a ski-lift arranged alongside, while the snow tracks that had been carved out through dense forests lay on the mountain slope like long waterfalls coming down from the sky.

Putting on the Ski Boots for the First Time

It was a weekend afternoon, and the whole skiing ground with people coming and going was quite a lively scene. Without taking any rest, I followed a group of excited visitors to the nearest outfitter to rent a skiing outfit. Skiers were asked to watch a videotape on skiing before

they queued up to get their rented outfits. Everyone was itching to ski before they

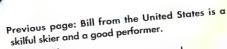
When we put on our ski boots, however, we had a different feeling, and started. hobbled around, not knowing how to move around properly.

Nevertheless, shouldering our skis and ski sticks, we followed the skiing coach with heavy steps toward the ski-lift, where chair-lifts would take us to the starting point of the beginners' ski-run. The weather was brilliant.

As I sat in the chair-lift and breathed the wholesome air, watching the treetops and ski-run flash past below, I was very excited. My longcherished dream would soon come true!

"Put on your skis and grasp your ski-sticks tightly," the coach shouted to us. "We'll first learn to balance, walk and climb slopes!" Scarcely had the coach's voice died down when the lot of us fell scattered on the ground.

Standing on the skis, we felt that our feet would not obey us: when we wanted to stand, they slipped away; and when we wanted to walk, they refused to move, as if they had taken root. With the coach's patient help, we spent a long while



- 1. A lively scene on the skiing ground This page:
- 2. Down-hill running is most beautiful to watch.
- 3. The snow on top of Sanguokui Peak in Yabuli is so great, people can't
- neip starting a snow ngm. 4. Coaches from Yabuli skiing school teac<mark>hing be</mark>ginners how to ski help starting a snow fight.











uncontrollable skis carry me towards the bell-like snow slope. My skis ran faster and faster. The snow-covered ground flashed by like flying clouds under my feet, the wind whistled past my ears, and I became like an arrow flying off the bow. I tried to stop, but failed. Finally, I was thrown into a snow drift. Though the tumble was hard, I didn't mind at all! After all, I was experiencing what skiing was like, and it was wonderful!

But before I had time to savour my experiences, I heard someone shouting

behind me: "Get out of the way! Quick!" I turned round and saw a girl clad in red screaming as she sped down the slope. Her movements were correct, but she couldn't turn around or come to a stop. Too nervous to fall down, she dashed through the gap between the crowds of people and a wooden bench into a corner of wall, where she landed! Before the voices died down on this side, roars arose from the other side as a robust young man dashed down to a group of young girls who were talking and laughing there. He knocked many of them down!

The Harder the Fall, the Happier the Laugh The neighbouring children's skiing ground





3

was an even more lively scene, with children and adults playing together. On top of the slope, over a dozen sledges lay in a row, some carrying only one person, others seating three or four. The riders were brave and spirited when the sledges started to run. But after the sledges ran a short distance, people began to fall off, some rolling on the slope, and others crying and screaming for help.

People had the feeling that the harder a tumble, the more interesting it was. Those who didn't fall laughed at those who did; those who fell flat on their backs laughed at themselves; and the onlookers split their sides with laughter. It was indeed the most amusing tourist programme I had ever seen.

Enchanting Performances by Skimeisters

The next day, when I learned that many Skimeisters would be skiing on the most steep (No. 9) ski-run at Sanguokui, I immediately rode a motorbike to the place.

The Skimeisters included a couple from the United States, several veteran coaches and two women ski guides from the Four Seasons

Travel Service. Among them, the best performer was the American called Bill. He was not only good in skiing, but also posed with his wife for us to take photos.

I Learned How to Ski in Three Days

I learned a lot during my three-day stay at the skiing ground. Helped by the coach, I began with learning how to walk and climb slopes on the first day. Then I learned how to keep my balance, go forward, reduce my speed, stop, turn around, and how to

protect myself during falls and how to stand up quickly. By the third day I was able to turn

around in my ski boots to do skiing on the slopes, and after mastering the technique of circling around and shifting gravity, I could slide freely on the steeper ski-run for second-grade skiers.

During my visit, in addition to learning to ski, I also went by horse-drawn carriage to a nearby skiing arena to watch the training of professional skiers.



- 1. An interesting skiing scene at Beidahu Skiing Ground
- Yabuli has the world's longest land sledge track.
- 3. Riding a snow mobile in the snow is one of the most exciting.
- 4. It is very poetic going skiing by horse-drawn cart.

FENGCHE MOUNTAIN VIILLAGE

Article by Shan Xiaogang and Iris Wong

Enjoying a European Lifestyle

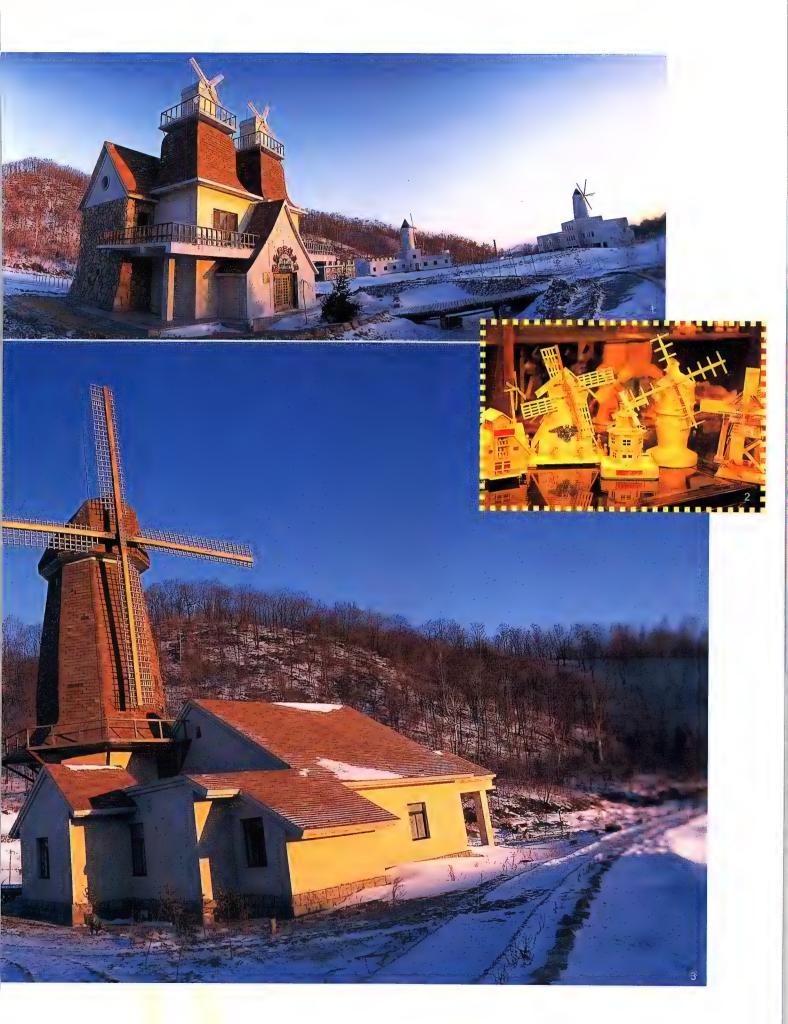
When we went skiing in Yabuli, we felt more as if we were in Europe. Around Fengche (Windmill) Village, where we stayed in Yabuli, were arranged various arrays of windmills. All the log cabins were in the shape of a windmill. Within the log cabin, there was a fireplace and the house as a whole was furnished in the European style. While it was a silvery white world with snow drifting outside, the warmth inside the cabin made us feel especially cosy.

One could easily feel as if one were living in Europe.

Upon our arrival, we saw a windmill standing alone on top of a sheer cliff, which was called "The Solitary Upon our arrival, we saw a windmill standing alone on top of a sheer cliff, which was called "The Solitary Upon our arrival, we saw a windmill standing alone on top of a sheer cliff, which was called "The Solitary Upon our arrival, we saw a windmill standing alone on top of a sheer cliff, which was called "The Solitary Upon our arrival, we saw a windmill standing alone on top of a sheer cliff, which was called "The Solitary Upon our arrival, we saw a windmill standing alone on top of a sheer cliff, which was called "The Solitary Upon our arrival, we saw a windmill standing alone on top of a sheer cliff, which was called "The Solitary Upon our arrival, we saw a windmill standing alone on top of a sheer cliff, which was called "The Solitary Upon our arrival, we saw a windmill standing alone on top of a sheer cliff, which was called "The Solitary Upon our arrival, we saw a windmill standing alone on top of a sheer cliff, which was called "The Solitary Upon our arrival, we saw a windmill standing alone on top of a sheer cliff, which was called "The Solitary Upon our arrival, we saw a windmill standing alone on top of a sheer cliff, which was called "The Solitary Upon our arrival, we saw a windmill standing alone on top of a sheer cliff, which was called "The Solitary Upon our arrival, which was called "The Solitary Upon our ar

The Windmill Villa in Yabuli (by Liu Xiangyang)
 2. Little souvenirs
 3. rengche Village in Strong European style. (by Liu Xiangyang)





It is quite correct to call this mountain village a museum of windmills. A friend in our group seemed to know quite a lot about windmills. He told me in detail the history of each model we visited. The "Robe" windmill first A Windmill Museum appeared at the mill of a farm owner in the Netherlands in the 17th century; the "Baci" windmill originated in France in the 14th century; the "Overcoat" windmill was invented in Germany in the 17th century, based on the design of a woman's overcoat; castle windmills came into being in the 18th and 19th centuries; and there were also twin windmills, etc. There were too many of them to remember. Roaming through the various windmills, I could not help feeling that I was being in the Netherlands, the "Land of Windmills."

Inside these exquisitely constructed windmill-shaped buildings were cosy nests in the form of standard and luxury hotel rooms with complete facilities. Generally, the windmill-like villas were of two

or three storeys. Some of them had sitting rooms and kitchens, the larger ones even had conference rooms and Jacuzzis, all being provided with first-rate services. And, in the forest to the west of Fengche Village, there were log cabins provided with garages, storehouses, gardens. Some of them looked like buildings in the American west, while others resembled the little log cabins of

We lived in the "Overcoat" Windmill. When we opened the window of the ethnic groups in Russia. top rooms of the building, we could reach our arms out to turn the huge wheel around. At night, the wheel cast its shadow on the floor in front of our beds. It turned around again and again, giving a strong romantic sense. It was very enchanting to those who lived long in deep forests.

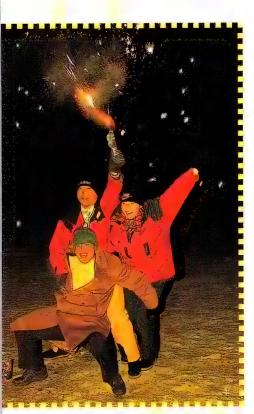
Living in Fengche Village with nothing to disturb me, my skiing improved very quickly. Within two days I could ski along the mountain slope right to the door of the log cabin we stayed in. Although I did not reach the level of being able to ski anywhere at will, I could at least move forward freely on skis as if driving a new car I had bought. If I felt like it, I could ski away for some time, and if I felt tired, I could ski back to rest.

During the resting time after skiing, we went to Fengche Holiday Hotel to drink coffee and enjoy the scenic photos exhibited in its lobby. We tried to do this at a leisurely pace so as to enjoy the European atmosphere.

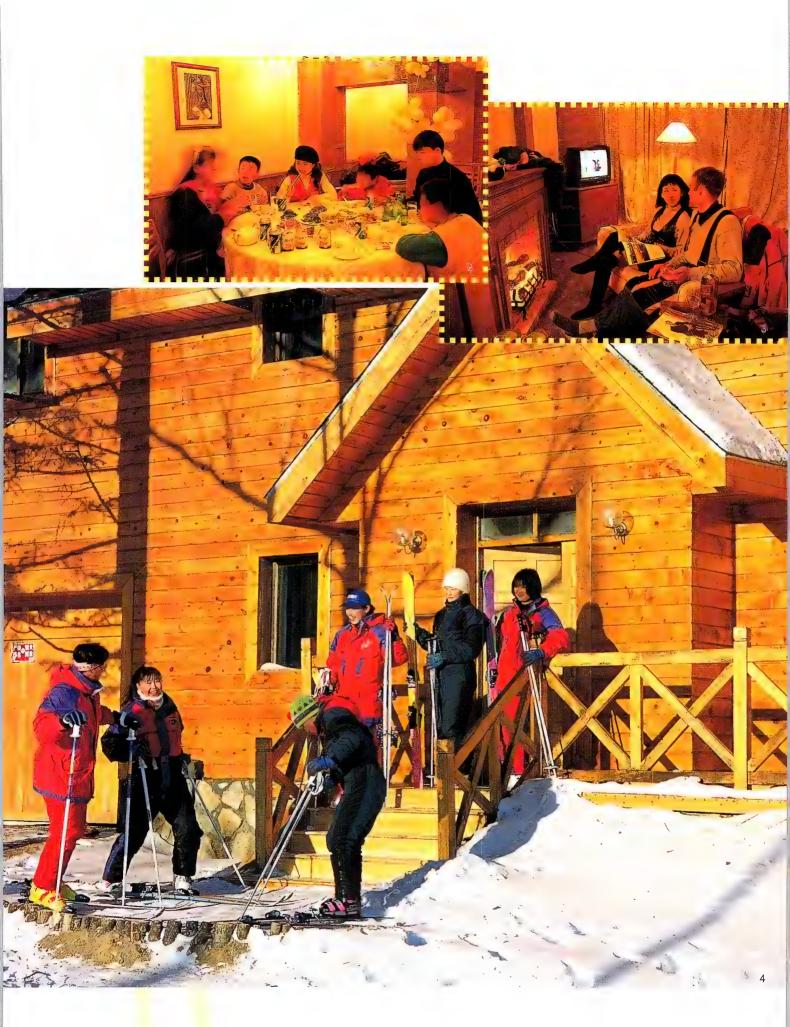
Soon, evening set in. After supper, we hastened to an open field beside the bonfire party to set off fireworks. Ordinarily, we seldom had the opportunity to set off fireworks, so now that we had the opportunity, we felt obliged to do it to our heart's content. Perhaps because people share so many of the same feelings, most of the holiday-makers gravitated to the same place, bought fireworks, and set them off, turning the dark night sky into a multicoloured one, amidst peals of laughter. Seeing such a scene, most people would take it to be New Year's Eve. For those of us who wished to avoid loneliness, and loved a lively atmosphere, setting off fireworks became a regular programme every evening.

Our holidays in Fengche Village came to an end before we knew it. When we looked at the photos of the place after we returned, we were surprised to find that they were much the same as those I had taken in Europe years ago. When I showed them to other friends, they asked in surprise: "You said you went to the Northeast, but why do these photos seem to have been taken in Holland?"

- 1. Setting off fireworks at night
- 2. Eating in a windmill cabin
- 3. A cosy hotel room
- 4. Skiing home







BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO S GROUNDS IN NORTHEAST (

There are many skiing grounds in Northeast China, but in terms of scale, facilities and transport the Yabuli Skiing Resort in Heilongjiang, and the Beidahu Skiing Resort in Jilin are the best. The Yabuli Skiing Resort is better equipped, but the price is higher. The Beidahu Skiing Resort where there is a longer snowing period with better snow, offers a more reasonable price. Tourists who love skiing had better go to both places to have different experiences.

ili Skiing Resor

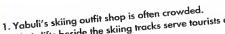
Yabuli Skiing Resort is located at the top of a mountain at 1,400 metres above sea level, 190 kilometres to the east of Harbin, capital of Heilongliang Province. It is China's first large skiing ground to international standards and is famous for its European-style Fengche (Windwheel) buildings.

There are 11 high-, middle- and elementary-grade ski tracks, in addition to a cross-country ski track, all together totalling 30 kilometres; a children's skiing area, a windwheel skiing area, and three ski-lifts. Besides, there is a "World's Number One" track, for sledge skiing. The track winds its way down from a mountaintop with a total length of 2,680 metres, a drop of 570 metres with 48 bends. People can go up the mountain by ski-lift, change to a sledge, and slip down along the stainless steel course. It takes only five minutes to cover the whole length. The speed can be fast or slow, and it is very stimulating. Other sports include riding snow-mobiles, snowfield hovercraft, horse sleighs or, dog sleighs and skating on Tianyin Lake. There are even fireworks and bonfire parties.

Inside the skiing ground the facilities are complete. In addition to hotels and shopping centres, there are skiing schools, shops for renting skiing outfits, a golf course, a fishing ground, a shooting range, a tennis court, a horse riding course and places for snow mobiles. While skiing and enjoying thei<mark>r holida</mark>y, visitors can also watch the windwheels in the Fengche Village.

Transport:

To get to Yabuli, you first fly to Harbin, where you change for a train or bus. The bus takes two and half hours, and the fare is 40-60 yuan. If you go by train, you get off at Yabuli Town and take a bus to the skiing ground.



^{2.} Chair-lifts beside the skiing tracks serve tourists and skiers.



Charges (Renminbi):

Sightseeing Cableways	20 yuan/person
Kangle Centre Cableway	30 yuan/person
Tianyinhu Cableway	40 yuan/person
Sanguokui Cableway	

• Skiing (including rental of outfits, ground and ski lift)

 Skiing (including rental 	of outilis, ground a	High-quality outfit and skis
	Challial A course	
Time	90 yuan/person	110 yuan/person
Two hours	150 yuan/person	180 yuan/person
Half day	260 yuan/person	330 yuan/person
One day	500 yuan/person	620 yuan/person
Two days	750 yuan/person	900 yuan/person
Three days		/ - **OP
Four days	1,000 yuan/person	/- ercon
Five days	1,200 yuan/persor	1 1/100 /
		00

Note: 1.13:00 is the demarcation for a half day. 2. A full skiing day is from 8:00-17:00.

3. Those who bring their own outfits are charged 70% of the ordinary fees. 4. Children below the height of 1.2 metres are charged 50% of the fees.

Rental Charges of Skiing Suits:

Rental Charges of Skilling Soller	30 yuan/half day; 50 yuan/day
Skiing suits	10 yuan/time
Сар	10 yuan/time
Gloves	

Skiing Coaching:	two hours	half day	one day	two days	three days
Pelson	100 yuan	160 yuan	240 yuan		
1 person 2-4 persons	160 yuan	220 yuan	350 yuan		10%
5-7 persons	200 yuan	300 yuan	450 yuan	10% discount	discount
8-10 persons	240 yuan	400 yuan	500 yuan	1	
The limit for each additional	30 yuan	40 yuan	50 yuan		
person in a group of ten					

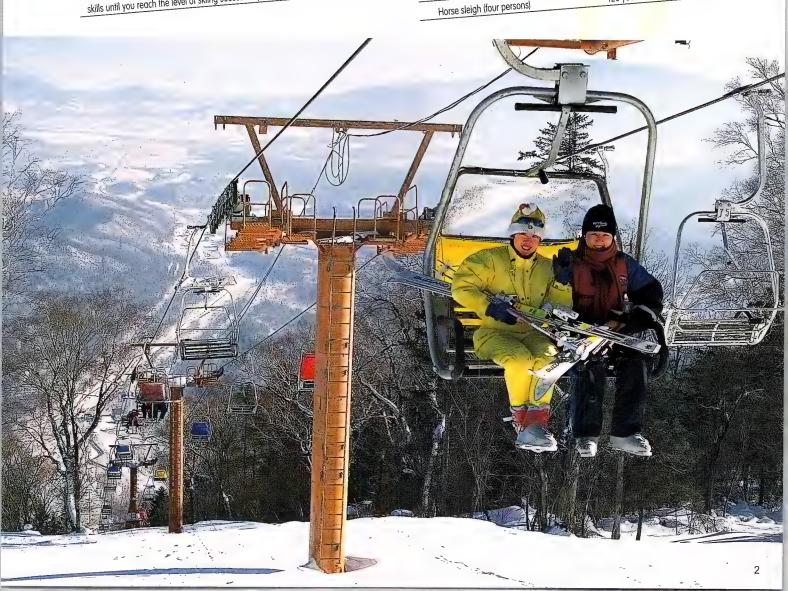
- In the two-hours/half-day course, you learn how to take the ski-lift, how to fall and get up, how to protect yourself during falls, how to keep your balance, how to walk and ski in the snow and other elementary skiing skills.
- In the one-day course, you learn how to keep your balance, how to walk and ski in the snow, how to slow down, stop, turn around, fall and stand up, and other elementary skiing skills until you reach the level of skiing successfully without falling.



- In the two-day course, on the basis of the first day, you continue to learn how to ski on an even track, how to get around obstacles, and how to shift your centre of gravity until you can ski freely on a steep track and turn in big circles.
- In the three-day course, you gain further experience and master various skiing techniques.
 Most beginners can, by now, move their skis and ski freely on a steeper track.

• Other Programmes in the Snow:

 Other Programmes in the Snow: 	180 yuan/half-hour
Snow-mobile	30 yuan/half-hour
Sledge	50 yuan/half-hour
Snowfield hovercraft Horse sleigh (four persons)	120 yuan/circ <mark>le</mark>



• Year-round Programmes:

 Year-round Programmes: 	80 yuan/person
The No. 1 track	60 yuan/half-hour
Horse riding	50 yuan/hour
Mini golf	60 yuan/hour
Tennis	120 yuan/person
Gliding	150 yuan/time (two or three persons)
Ballooning	5 yuan/time
Grass sliding	300 yuan/party
Bonfire party	

In Yabuli Fengche Village there are the Fengche Holiday Hotel (a two-Accommodation: star hotell, Fengche Log Cabin Villa and Yashiqi Youth House. The Fengche Holiday Hotel, in the shape of a windmill, is on a lakeside. It has Chinese and Western restaurants, ballrooms, bars, bowling alleys, a gym and a massage parlour. The Fengche Log Cabin Villa, built in the European style, lies in a beautiful valley.

A standard room costs from 570-660 yuan, a villa (from 2 to 23 beds) from 1,780-9,580 yuan, and the charge for a room (3 beds) in the Youth House is 360-420 yuan.

Food:

There are Chinese and Western restaurants and cafes. The food is mainly cooked in Northeast Chinese and Sichuan styles.

Shopping:

Various wooden windmills are available for souvenirs.

Best Skiing Season:

From early December to the end of March.

Other Activities:

Spring is mainly for visits. Summer activities

include grass sliding, fishing, hovercrafting, land-sledging, motorriding on grassland, horse-riding, golf, tennis and shooting. Autumn is the season to enjoy scenery, as well as the summer activities. In addition, there are all kinds of modern facilities in the recreation centre, which is open to tourists in all seasons.

For Contact:

Fengche Village: telephone: (431) 345 5088 Harbin: Four Seasons Travel Service Tel: (451) 367 8616, 367 8990, 367 8992

Address: 2/F Xinsanxing Hotel, 308 Dazhi Street East, Harbin

Beijing: Tel: (10)6466 33 96, 6466 4016 Address: Room 905, Main Building, No. 15, Zuojiazhuang, Chaoyang District, Beijing

Beidahu Skiing Ground in

Beidahu Skiing Resort, where the skiing competition of the winter sports of the Eighth National Games was held, has excellent natural conditions. Deep snow reaches right to your doorway, and the skiing season here is longer than at the other grounds.

In addition to skiing tracks for high- and middle-grade skiers and beginners, Beidahu Skiing Resort has a 10,000-metre cross-country track, and a floodlit skiing track. The first three of its six ski lifts run up to Nanlou Mountain at 1,404 metres above sea level. Other installations include a tower for running down, a shooting range, and a mountain spring swimming pool.

Beixue Hall inside the skiing resort is a tourist hotel. It is equipped with shopping centres, restaurants, a health centre, a table tennis room, conference halls, a ballroom, bars and a gym.

Regular mini-buses set out for Beidahu at 7:00 in the morning every Transport: day from Chaluxiang Passenger Station in front of the railway station in Jilin. It takes one and a half hours to cover the 56 kilometres to arrive there, and the fare is 7.20 yuan. It costs 100-150 yuan to hire a taxi.

Accommodation:

Beixue Hall at Beidahu provides the best service. A standard room costs 256 yuan a day.

Charges:

Ski lift: 10 yuan/person; 100 yuan/day.

Skiing outfit: 30 yuan/half-day; 50 yuan/day.

Sledge: 20 yuan

Floodlit skiing: 40 yuan/three hours

Best Skiing Season: From early December to the end of March.

For Contact:

Beidahu Skiing Resort: Tel: (421) 85 2008

Changchun: Changbaishan International Travel Service

Tel: (431) 568 8919

Hong Kong: Lisi Co. Ltd. Tel: (852) 2857 2993

Beijing: Forest International Travel Service Tel: (10) 6427 7905

Korea: Office of Beidahu Skiing Resort in Seoul Tel: 02 562 0350





Points of Attention:

Clothes: It is rather cold in skiing grounds located high in the mountains. Those who go skiing there must take enough clothes to ward off the cold. But when skiing, you need to be very active, and your body and limbs must be quick, so it is not good to wear too heavy clothes. Generally speaking, cotton underclothes, a woollen sweater and windbreaker, and a waterproof ski suit is enough. You'd better take as many underclothes as possible, so that you can change when you get wet with sweat.

Choice of skiing outfits: Skiing outfits must fit you well. Ski boots, for example, must be bigger than the shoes you wear, and ski sticks must suit

Other necessities: As the reflection of light is rather harsh in the snow, you must take a pair of sunglasses with you. You will also need protective face cream and lip salve.

Suggestions and advice:

Beginners must get help from a coach, so that they can learn the basic skiing techniques more quickly. They must read the guidebook carefully to learn the conditions and regulations of the skiing ground, and mustn't enter the forest or the Skimeister's tracks without permission in order to avoid accidents. If any accident occurs, you can ask the nearest Red Cross firstaid station for help.

Choice of time:

Try to avoid going skiing at weekends or holidays. The excessively large crowds may spoil your fun.

- 1. The skiing outfit shop at Yabuli Skiing Resort.
- 2. The scenic Beidahu Skiing Ground (by Lin Zengqiang) 3. Colourfully clad skiers at Beidahu Skiing Ground (by Yu Yanan)

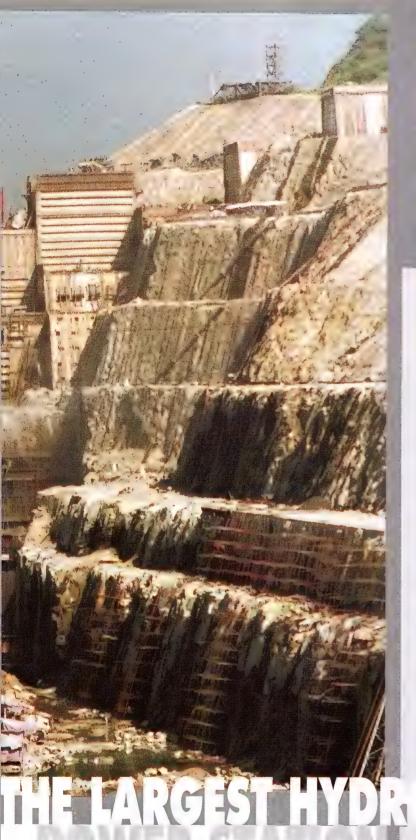




On the morning of November 8, 1997, the Three Gorges Water Conservancy Project, the largest of its kind in the world, entered a crucial stage. The mountains that line both sides of the river were packed with onlookers waiting anxiously to witness the damming up of the mighty Yangtse River. When three green signal flares arched into the sky, the work-site came to life immediately, and 400 heavy-duty dump trucks arranged in two long lines began shuttling to and fro on both arms of the dam. With stones weighing several dozen tons apiece being dumped into the river in a constant stream, the gap in the dam narrowed steadily. As the drop in the water level increased, the flow of the river rose dramatically. The dumping of stones was then intensified, and the engineering work was approaching its climax. After six and a half hours of continuous stone-dumping, the two arms of the great dam finally joined. The course of the Yangtse River had thus been changed, and tumbled down through a temporary approach channel.









The Largest Hydroelectric Power Station

The Three Gorges Project, to be completed in 17 years, calls for an enormous investment – upwards of 200 billion yuan. But where will all this money come from? Will the project be aborted because of financial difficulties? It was with these questions in mind that I interviewed He Gong, deputy general manager of the China Yangtse River Three Gorges Project Development Corporation.

"The money comes from many sources," said He Gong, and he began enumerating a series of statistics on his fingertips. "First of all, we have government subsidies, which amount to 3 billion yuan a year, collected by charging an additional 0.001 yuan for the use of each kwh of electricity throughout the country, with the exception of a few underdeveloped regions. Second, all the profits of the Gezhouba Hydroelectric Power Station are at our disposal. These two sums add up to four to five billion yuan annually. Third, we can absorb funds from foreign investors by ways such as obtaining loans from foreign commercial banks and issuing treasury bonds."

"It goes without saying that all this money will have to be repaid, but we are not worried," he said. According to him, once the Three Gorges Hydroelectric Power Station begins operation, it will easily recoup 50 billion yuan yearly to repay all the debts in time. With an annual electricity output of 84.7 billion kwh, the Three Gorges Project will become the world's largest hydroelectric power station.

Power generation, however, is not all the project is about, according to He. The primary goal of the project is to free the entire Yangtse River valley from the scourge of floods. Once a permanent dam has been thrown across the river, an immense reservoir will accumulate on its upper reaches, considerably strengthening the anti-flooding capacity of regions on its middle and lower reaches, and providing effective flood protection for 15 million people, 1.5 million hectares of farmland, and all the cities and towns in the Central China Plain.

Unlike other Chinese water conservancy projects, the Three Gorges Project faces the Herculean task of resettling an unprecedented number of local residents. When the reservoir is completed, the water level will rise from 65 metres to 175 metres, and 1,084 square kilometres of land, stretching from the dam in Yichang to the Chaotian Gate Dock in Chongging, will be submerged. As a result 1.2 million people who live in this region (one million in Sichuan and Chongging, and the rest in Hubei) will have to be resettled elsewhere. The State Council has established an ad hoc bureau to oversee this resettlement work, and the Three Gorges Corporation has been entrusted with the task of raising 40 billion yuan to finance the resettlement. At least eight out of 10 labourers at Three Gorges Project work-sites come from Wanxian, a county-level city under the jurisdiction of Chongging Municipality. Wanxian residents have been accorded this privilege in employment because nearly 800,000 of the 1.2 million people to be resettled live in Wanxian.

Zigui, the First County to Be Relocated

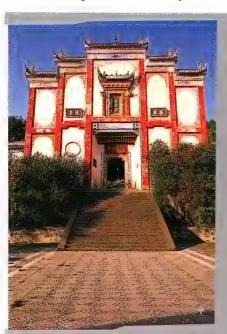
After the Yangtse River is dammed up, its water level will rise by 10 metres. The county seat of Zigui, which is located close to the dam, will become the first town within the Three Gorges to resettle its residents. Quite a few stores and hotels in this ancient town are named after Qu Yuan, to remind travellers that this was the home town of the great poet of the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.), who drowned himself in the Miluo River in Hunan Province. A temple dedicated to the memory of Qu Yuan is perched on the brow of a hill by the Yangtse River 2.5 kilometres east of the county seat. Legend has it that this temple was first built at the spot where a divine fish landed with the remains of Qu Yuan. In 1976, when construction of the Gezhouba Dam was begun, the Qu Yuan Temple was moved to its present site at Xiangjiaping. It is to be moved once again – this time to Maoping – to make room for the project.

Row upon row of houses at the foot of the city wall of Zigui have already been demolished. A group of workers were hammering at the concrete walls and salvaging steel reinforcing bars and bricks out of the debris. I bumped into Zhang, a 65-year-old Jiangsu native who happened to be loitering about the ruins. He told me that when he first arrived in 1957, he stayed for a while in one of the wood shanties. "I built a two-storey brick-and-tile house in 1983," he said, and, shaking his head in dismay, added, "I thought I could stay here for the rest of my life, but because of the Three Gorges Project, I've got to go." Zhang's wife was also reluctant to move. "We have lived here for 40 years, and the six members of my family are doing well here. Besides, we built our house with our own hands – every brick and tile of it," she said.

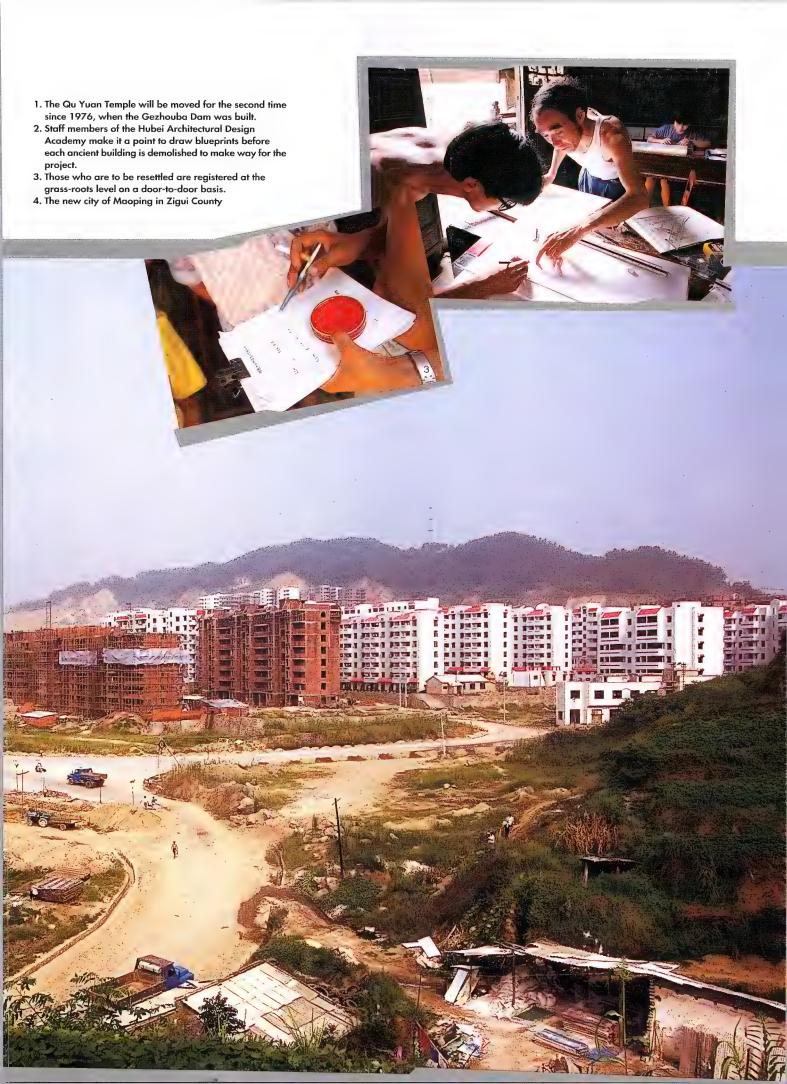
A new county seat is being built at Maoping, 50 kilometres from Yichang.

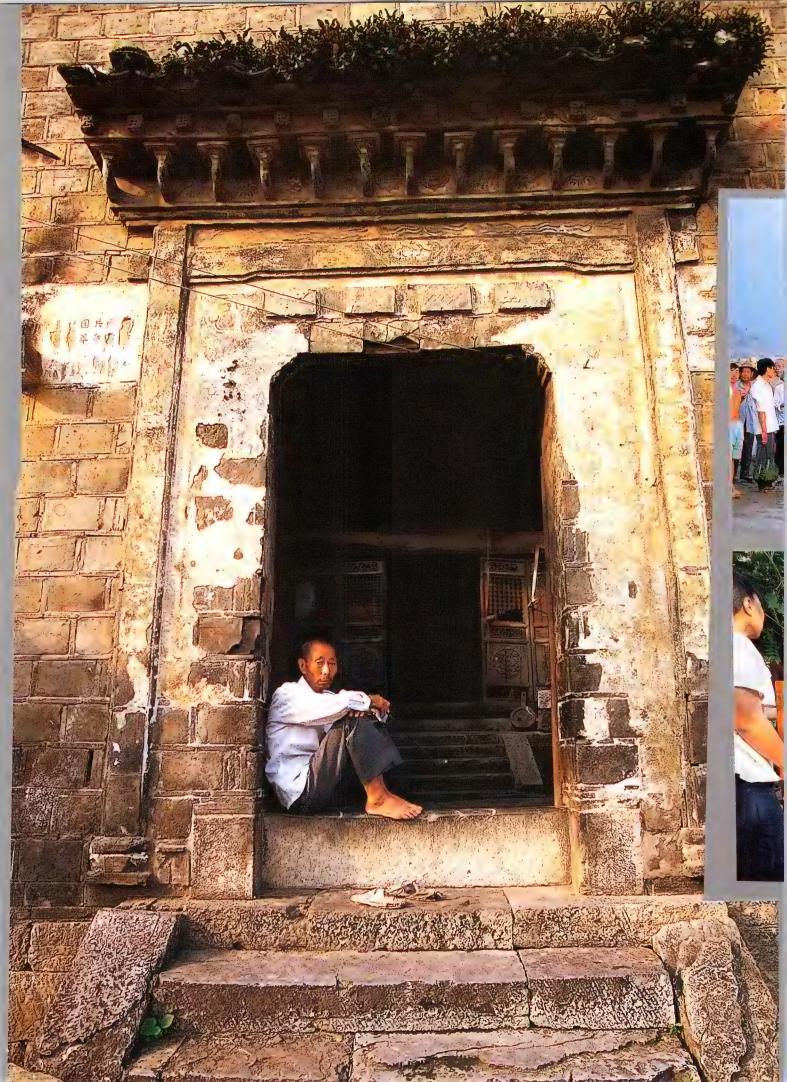
From a long-term point of view, resettlement might not be a bad idea for the local people. That was why Zhang Jun, the old man's son, and his wife thought differently from their parents. The young couple just could not wait to go, for their elder daughter was

to begin school next vear in the new county seat, and they wanted to remodel their new home there. "Life here is becomina very inconvenient. because the old county has stopped growing for quite a few









 The impending departure from home has touched local people's hearts with melancholy.

 Backpack baskets are favourite tools among the local people even when it comes to carrying things as large as closets.

3. Boats are a major means of transportation for the resettlement.

4. Cleaning the furniture before the move



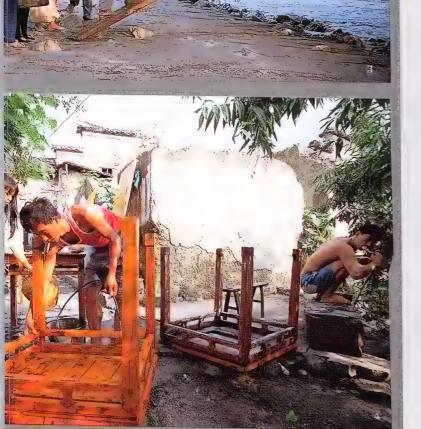
years," Zhang Jun said. "The kids are growing up, but we don't even have a place to take a shower."

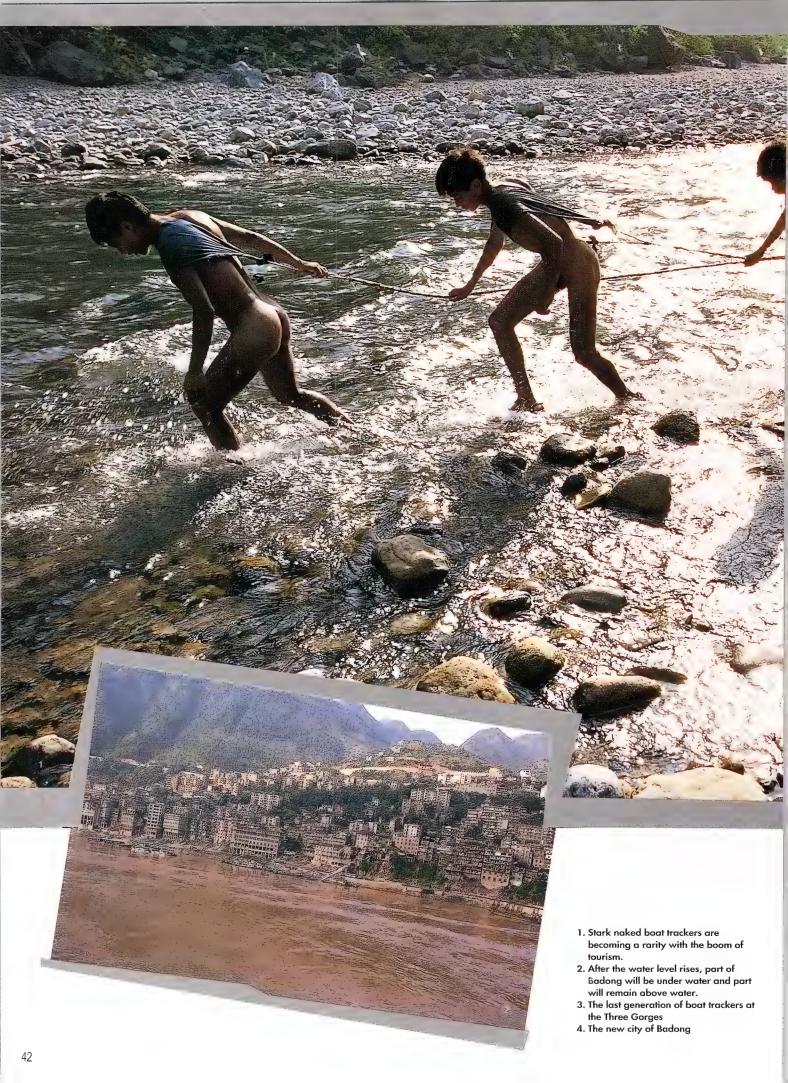
The young couple were running a small grocery store in the old county seat. Last year, they paid a visit to the new county seat at Maoping. "The new place is so

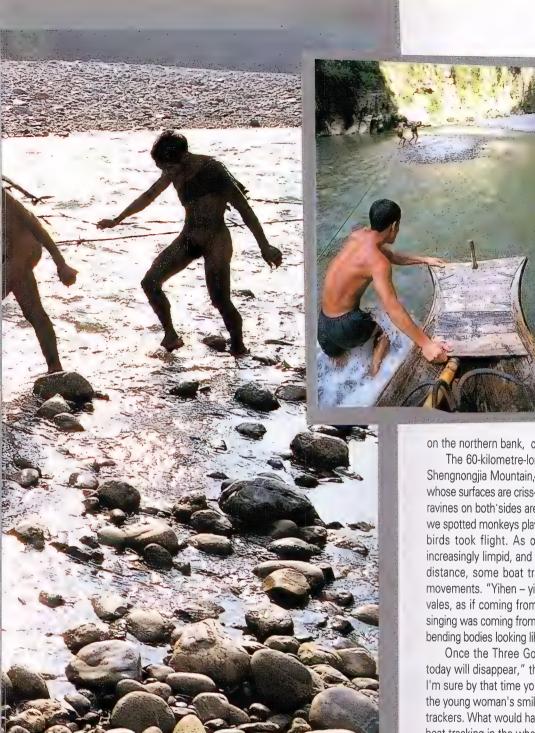
large, and the residential quarters look so good – they are built according to a well-conceived plan. The 25-metre-wide concrere streets are wonderful compared with the four-metre-wide ones in the old town. Besides, the new county seat is close to Yichang, which means we can get supplies more easily." The young couple was obviously full of expectations for their future in their future homeland.

Song Wenshu used to be a soldier stationed in Yunnan. He and his wife were both Zigui natives. After he got married, his wife joined him in the barracks, and both their sons were born in Yunnan. "When we were demobilised in 1978 we could have remained in Yunnan, where life was better, and the weather was spring-like all year round. We ended up returning home, perhaps because the name of our county means 'homecoming,'" said Song's wife. The Songs were basically in favour of resettling, except that Song Wenshu's wife was some what reluctant. "The scenery here is good, and things here are cheap," she said. "Houses in the new town sell for 800 yuan per square metre, which is a lot of money for us." Song Wenshu, however, seemed more far-sighted, believing that the construction of the new hydroelectric power station would provide good opportunities for Zigui. Wang Fang, their daughter-inlaw, did not have much to say about the move, but she had decided that she would continue her photo studio business in the new town.

As we were leaving Zigui, we met Huang Guishan, a young farmer who lived in the suburbs of Zigui. He was carrying a huge cabinet on his back. He told us that each rural resident was to be given 200 yuan for resettlement, in addition to a reimbursement of 110 yuan per square metre of their old houses. "Our new house looks so fancy that our old furniture does not look suitable any more. So I've had new furniture made." He invited us to his new house, but, pressed for time, we had to decline his invitation.







The Last Boat Trackers in the Three Gorges

Sailing up the Yangtse from Zigui, we went through the 40-kilometre-long Zigui Valley to arrive at Badong. The new city of Badong has just been built on a slope behind the old city. From the southern side of the river, the new city looked like a new hat worn on top of the old. Once the reservoir is completed, the old city will vanish thoroughly under water.

As the morning sun shone on the peaks beyond the new city of Badong, Tan Xiaoling, our young guide, stood on one side of a floating pier and, waving a tiny yellow flag in her hand, beckoned the travellers aboard a small boat. The boat sailed against the tide for about eight kilometres, then left the Yangtse River at a tiny village

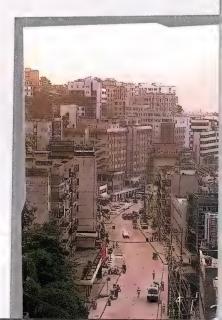
on the northern bank, carrying us to Shengnong Stream.

The 60-kilometre-long Shengnong Stream, which originates in Shengnongjia Mountain,-is hemmed in between perpendicular cliffs whose surfaces are criss-crossed with ancient-looking vines. The deep ravines on both sides are teeming with wildlife. Every now and then we spotted monkeys playing in the thickets, while swarms of startled birds took flight. As our boat sailed forth, the water became increasingly limpid, and the river bed more and more visible. In the distance, some boat trackers were singing to synchronise their movements. "Yihen – yiyao – oh...." The singing echoed low in the vales, as if coming from remote antiquity. At the place where the singing was coming from, a number of men were forging ahead, their bending bodies looking like loaded fishing poles.

Once the Three Gorges Project is completed, what you see today will disappear," the guide said, "but new sights will appear. I'm sure by that time you'll come again, won't you?" As I looked at the young woman's smiling face, my thoughts were still on the boat trackers. What would happen to them? There would be no need for boat tracking in the whole Three Gorges area.

We returned to the Yangtse River and entered the Wuxia

Gorge. Extending for a distance of approximately 45 kilometres, Wuxia is situated in the middle of the Three Gorges. It cuts a zigzag course between mountain ranges that soar into heaven in exotic shapes. The most famous of these are the 12 peaks of the Wushan Mountain. A path of planks leads to Qinashi Town on the southern shore, which provides the best view of Angel Peak, the most charming of the peaks.

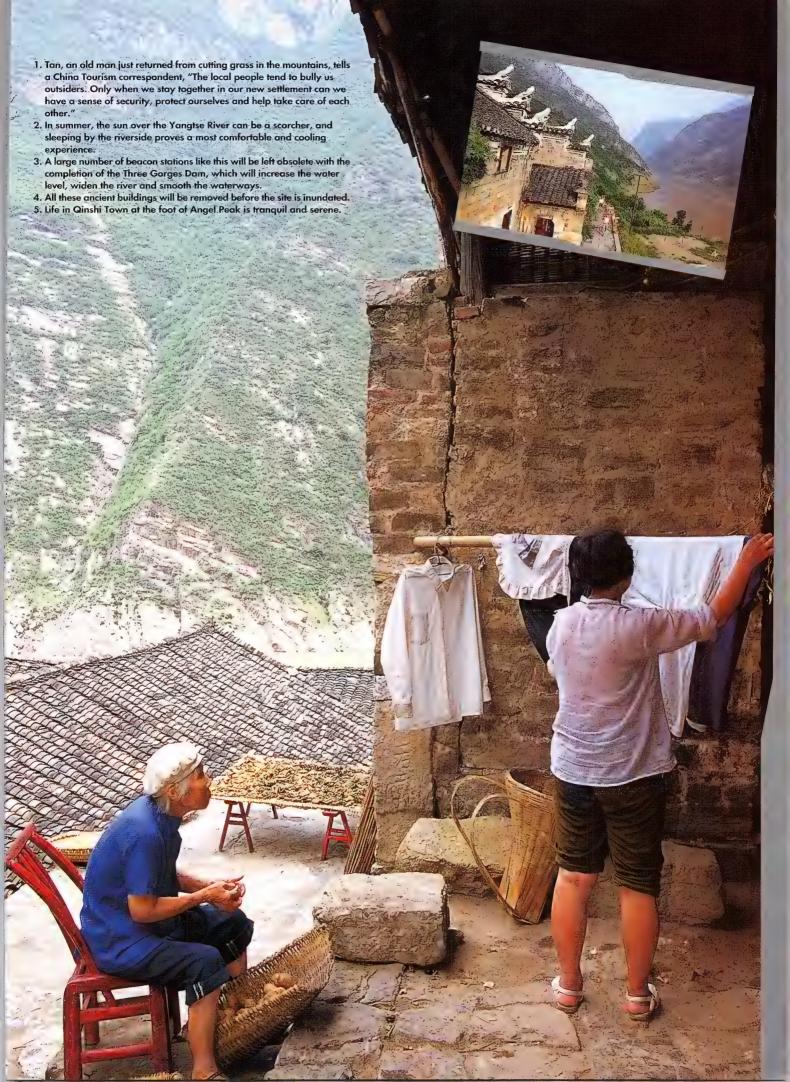


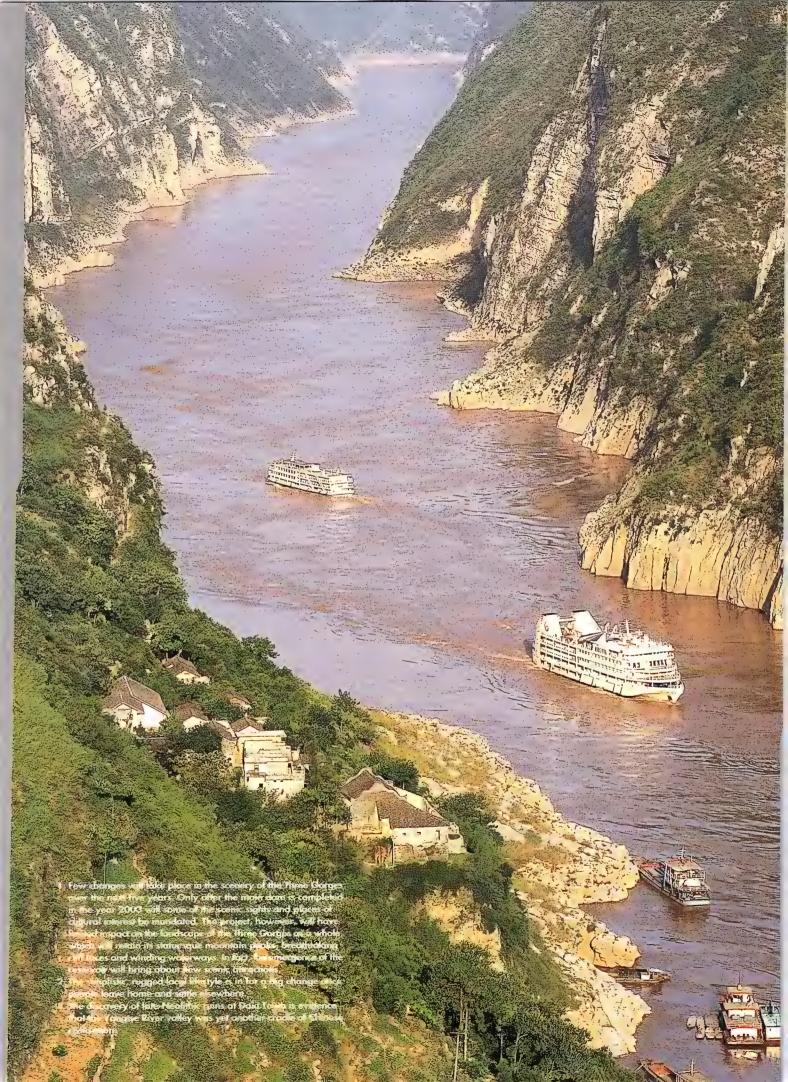
Where Is My Home to Be?

A settlement of 40 or so families, Qingshi is a tiny, sleepy town that wakes up only twice a day – in the morning when a tiny passenger boat arrives from Wushan up-river, and in the afternoon when another passenger boat returns from the day-trip from Peishi. Life goes on here as if Thomas Edison had never invented the electric bulb, as townspeople get up at sunrise to start the day's work, and prepare to go to bed when the sun sets. The impending resettlement will definitely bring a new lease of life to the town, yet people are worried. Tan, an old man who had just returned from cutting grass in the mountains, told me, "Wherever the new settlement is, we will become a minority among the people already there, who tend to lord it over outsiders. Only if the town is moved



Qingshi is where one of the eighty-odd beacon towers in the Three Gorges is situated. Gong Taiquan, a native of Guangzhou, was on duty during our visit. He told us he had worked there for more than two decades. "After all these years I've got used to this environment. A few years ago, I returned to my hometown, Guangzhou, for a visit, and I found it difficult to get used to it. There were too many people and automobiles, and the air was stale. Besides, the cost of living was not to my liking," he said, stepping out of the door and hoisting a signal flag with an upward-pointing arrow on it. In the distance, the tiny white dot of a passenger liner appeared. Talking about the impact of the Three Gorges Project, he said, "The water level will be raised, the river will become wider,





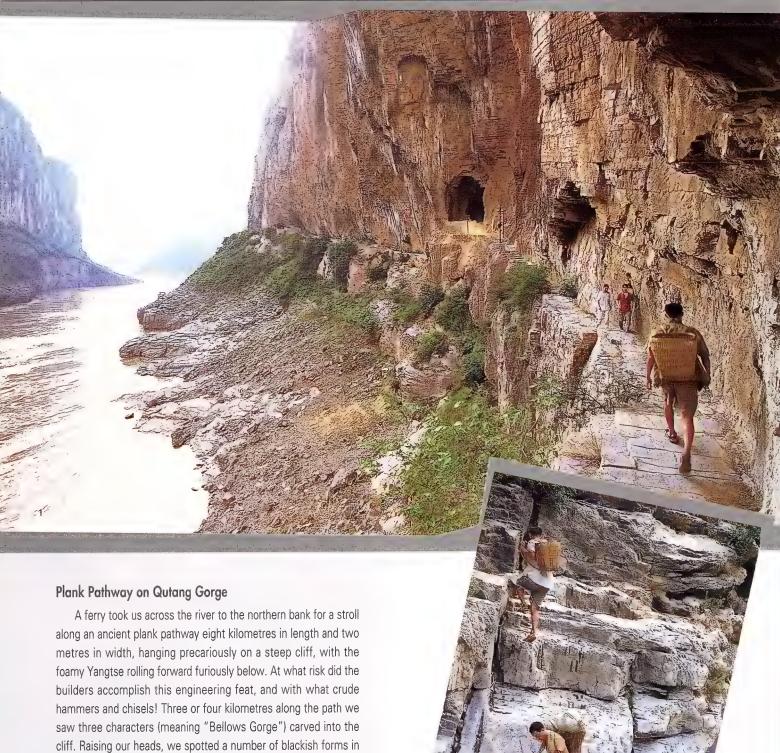
the waterway will become smoother, so most of the beacon towers will be abandoned. But when all this happens, I'll be retired."

Even before daybreak, the Wushan Dock some 30 kilometres from Qingshi Town was already packed with people waiting for boats to take them on a cruise of the Lesser Three Gorges. Some of them had seldom travelled but managed to put in a few days for this trip, and some of them were foreigners who were new to China. All of them chose to come at this time for fear that, after the Yangtse was dammed up, the picturesque scenery of the Three Gorges would be no more. In fact, an approach channel had been dug even before the damming took place, so that shipping on the river would go on as usual. In fact, few changes will take place in the Three Gorges over the next five years. Only after the dam is completed in



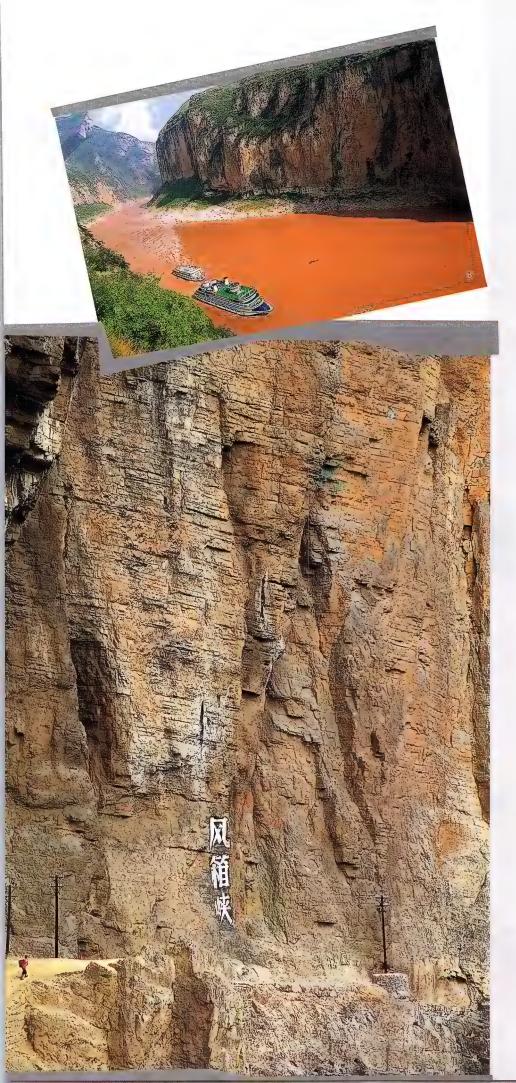
the year 2003 will some of the scenic spots and places of cultural interest be inundated. But the effect of the project on the broader landscape will be only marginal because of the fact that the mountains are simply too high to be covered by the water. On the contrary, the abundance of water will add to the precipitousness and depth of the mountains and valleys in the Minor Three Gorges.

Sailing through the 25-kilometre-long Wushan Valley from the county seat of the same name, we arrived at Daxi Town at the eastern entrance to Qutang Gorge. Daxi Town became famous when a group of late-Neolithic ruins was discovered there —evidence that the Yangtse River valley was yet another cradle of Chinese civilisation. Because the town will be inundated once the Three Gorge Reservoir begins storing water, archaeological excavation is in high gear to save as many cultural artefacts as possible.



the shape of bellows sandwiched between the crevices of the rock face. Legend has it that the "bellows" belonged to Lu Ban, a legendary carpenter. Three medicinal herbs collectors once climbed up the cliff and found that the "bellows" were actually coffins containing the remains of people from the ancient kingdom of Ba of more than 2,000 years ago.

Stopping at the observation deck with an imitation fort built on it, we saw mountains hugging the river from both sides like a huge gate. Torrents of water tumbled through the "gate" and rolled on towards us in a most spectacular fashion. The situation is just as the celebrated poet Du Fu described, "Numerous streams of water converge at Peiwan, ready for a fight at Qutang." This was the spot where a much-vaunted foreign daredevil wire-walked across the Yangtse last year. The wire is still there, describing a huge arc in the sky as it extends from shore to shore. Less than six months later,



his record was broken by a young man from Xinjiang, who walked across the river faster and in a more poised manner.

See You 10 Years Later, Three Gorges!

We left the plankway, crossed the Caotang River by a suspension bridge, and arrived at Baidi City, to which Liu Bei, ruler of the Kingdom of Shu of the Three Kingdom period (220-280) had retreated after his failure in an expedition against the Kingdom of Wu, and where, before breathing his last, he entrusted his son and the destiny of the Kingdom of Shu to his confidante, Zhuge Liang. Actually, the Yong'an Palace where all this took place was not in Baidi, but in a place now occupied by a normal school in Fengije. As the palace has long since disappeared, a large group of sculptures has been erected in Baidi to commemorate this event.

The Temple of Baidi consists of a series of tourist spots illustrating historical episodes of that period, including Zhuge Liang's astrological observation pavilion, the Mingliang Hall where the likes of Liu Bei, Guan Yu, Zhang Fei and Zhuge Liang are enshrined, and the Temple of Marquis Wu dedicated to the memory of Zhuge Liang and his son. The temple also features two stele forests, which include such famous calligraphic inscriptions as that of the Phoenix Tablet and the Bamboo Leaf Tablet. When the water level is raised, the city of Baidi will become an island accessible by ferry.

At Baidi I wound up my 173-kilometre journey of the Three Gorges. With the Kuimen Gorge shimmering faintly in the distance, I said to myself that 10 years from now I would come and visit the Three Gorges again, and bring along my family. My child will be born next year, and before long I will tell him about what I've seen during this trip to the Three Gorges.

- 1. The eight-kilometre-long plank pathway along Gutang Gorge
- This ancient plank road will be submerged once the dam is completed.
- Gutang Gorge is the shortest, narrowest and most risky of the three gorges on the Yangtse River.
- 4. Fengxiang Gorge

Tips for the Traveller

The 6,380-kilometre-long Yangtse River is the longest in China, and the third longest in the world. The Three Gorges, which extends for 193 kilometres from Baidi City in Fengjie, Sichuan, in the west to Nanjin Pass in Yichang, Hubei, in the east, is the most enchanting section of the river. Qutang Gorge is eight kilometres long, Wuxia Gorge 44 kilometres, and Xiling Gorge 76 kilometres. After the damming of the river, shipping has been going on as usual, and over the next five years the scenery will remain very much the same. When the main dam is built and the reservoir begins storing water in the year 2003, the raised water level will affect 13 cities and 44 places of historical and cultural interest along the Three Gorges. Some of them will be submerged, such as Zigui, Badong, the Qutang Plank Pathway, the Zhang Fei Temple at Yunyang, and the Stone Fish at Fuiling. Others will be partially inundated, such as Wushan Mountain, Fengjie and Shibao (Stone Treasure) Villa.

Transport:

The cruise line on the Yangtse from Chongqing to Yichang features such stopovers as Fuling, Fengdu, Zhongxian, Wanxian, Yunyang, Fengjie, Wushan and Badong. The number of boats sailing along this route is on the increase, and the boats run the gamut from ordinary motorboats to five-star pleasure liners. Same-day cruises are also in operation from Chongqing to Wushan and from Yichang to Fengjie. Apart from cruising the Three Gorges, the tourist may also choose to stroll along one of the ancient plank pathways suspended midway on the cliffs. The eight-kilometre-long Qutang Gorge – the shortest, narrowest yet most spectacular of the Three Gorges – is strewn with scenic sights and places of cultural interest,

such as Kuimen Pass, Chalk Wall, Mengliang Staircase, the "Monk Hanging Upside Down", suspended coffins at Bellows Gorge, Seven Gates (Qidaomen) and Jianxie (Off-and-On) Spring.

Hotel Rates (standard room/night):

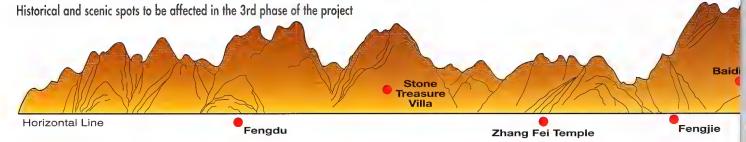
Zigui Hotel: 120 yuan; Badong Hotel: 120 yuan; Wushan Hotel: 180 yuan; Baidi Reception House at Fengjie: 30 yuan; Fengjie Hotel, 220 yuan.

New Tourist Spots

A new tourist programme combining exploration of nature with canoeing has just been opened at the Mini Three Gorges on the upper reaches of the Madu River, situated at the end of the Lesser Three Gorges at Wushan.



The Top Hydroelectric Power Dams in the World Sayano -Shushensk 6,400 Dam in Russia Dam Grand 6.809 Coulee in USA Dam Guri in 10,300 Venezuela Dam Itaipu in Brazil, 12,600 Paraguay Three Gorges Dam in 18,200 Yangtze River China 20,000 (in trillion watt) 10,000



White Crane Rock

Rise in the Water Level and Tourist Spots Affected

Project	Progress	Water Level	Spots Affected
Phase I (1993~1997)	River dammed on Nov. 8, 1997	from 65m to 75m	Nil
Phase II (1998~2003)	Main dam, power plant and shipping gate constructed	to 135m in 2003	Zhang Fei Temple
Phase III (2004~2009)	Project completed and operation of power plants begins	to 156m in 2006; to 175m between 2009 and 2012	39 tourist spots submerged (13% of the total number): Quyuan Hall, Wuxia Gorge and rock caves, etc.

Total rise in water level: 110 metres

Submerged area: 1,084 square kilometres, including 650 square kilometres of land.

- 1. After the year 2003, Stone Treasure Villa will be turned into an island.
- 2. The last generation of boat trackers at the Three Gorges
- 3. A temple fair in Ghost City in Fengdu County
- 4. Nanjin Pass, situated at the east exit of the 76-kilometrelong Xiling Gorge, the last of the Three Gorges
- 5. White Crane Rock at Fuling
- 6. The majority of settlers resulting from the Three Gorges Project come from the city of Wanxian.
- 7. A glimpse of Chaotianmen Dock, Chongqing
- 8. The work-site of the Three Gorges Dam at Sandouping, Yichang.
- 9. Shennu (Angel) Peak of Wuxia Gorge
- 10. With the rise of the water level upon completion of the reservoir, Baidi City will become an island accessible by

Illustration of the 1st phase of the project



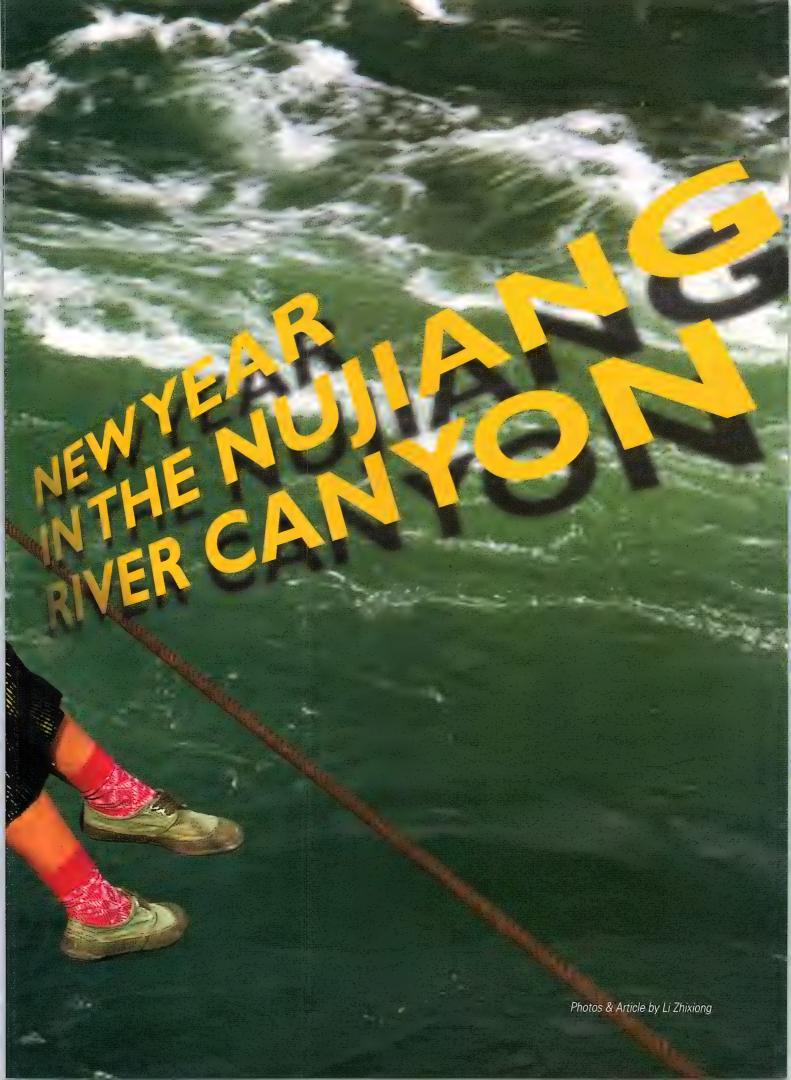


Residence of Quyuan



Horizontal Line





Previous page: Sliding over the river on a rope

- Bathing on the second day of the Chinese New Year
- 2. The Great Bend of Nujiang River
- 3. Hot springs at Yuejin Bridge
- 4. A Drung couple
- 5. A Bai girl bathing in the hot spring



I had long yearned for a visit to the Nujiang River. My wish was at last to come true and, what is more, it was to take place during the Spring Festival. With great pleasure, our group of seven set out from Kunming. While travelling west, each of us had our own picture of how we imagined the local ethnic minorities would be celebrating the Spring Festival.

Hougiao Township: A Lesson Given by a Dog

The first stop of our Nujiang visit was Tengchong County, home of the authentic sword-ladder show of the Lisu ethnic group. When our bus passed the frontier inspection station and drove into a small village in Houqiao Township, it was already 3:00 p.m. on the 30th day of the last lunar month, and every family in the village had made preparations to celebrate New Year's eve. Though unexpected, we were entertained with courtesy and warmth. We were entertained by many families, bidding farewell to one only to be being ushered in by another. While engrossed in exchanging greetings with the host, I did not notice a dog at the corner of the wall, staring at me vigilantly. It caught me off

guard and gave me a severe bite on the shank. Blood oozed out immediately. The hosts naturally offered profuse apologies after their guest from afar was bitten by the family dog. The hostess busied herself with washing and binding up the wound, while Yu Jiankuan, the host, solemnly took out a complete set of ritual utensils and earnestly chanted incantations for my safety. Yu, 73-year-old, was the first in the village to climb up the sword ladder barefooted. When he was young, he became highly skilled in martial arts. Moreover, he learned from his predecessors the ways of chanting incantations to drive away evil spirits, and so, now, he serves as the village sorcerer. Whenever an event, big or small, takes place in the village, he is invited to chant incantations and practice divination. Obviously, I would not have been given such special treatment were it not for the dog bite. When we had a group picture taken, the dog refused to show itself no matter how the old man called it.

When we returned to Tengchong, the county seat, it was already after 10:00 p.m. In Kunming, firecrackers had been banned two years previously. But they had not been banned in Tengchong, and the local



people could still set off firecrackers to their heart's content. Lured by the sound of firecrackers, we, too, bought some and joined the local people, enjoying ourselves till the small hours of the morning.

Liuku: Communal Bathing in the Nude

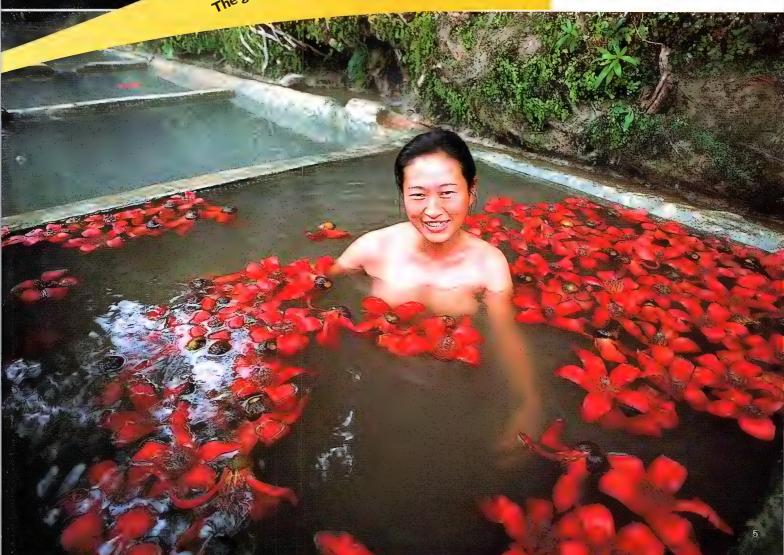
In the Nujiang area, communal bathing takes place from the first day to the third day of the first month of the lunar calendar, with the climax on the second day, when, apart from such traditional activities as crossbow shooting and swinging competitions, films are shown and antiphonal singing is held as well.

We arrived at Liuku, capital of the Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture, at 5:00 p.m. on lunar New Year's Day. To prove whether what we had heard about the communal bathing was true, we did not stop, but drove straight on to the villages of Denggeng and Yuejinqiao situated in the hot spring area. From a distance, we saw people gathering in an open area near the river, some were putting up tents outside mountain caves, and others were making preparations for picnics. We pull over to walk along a narrow winding trail

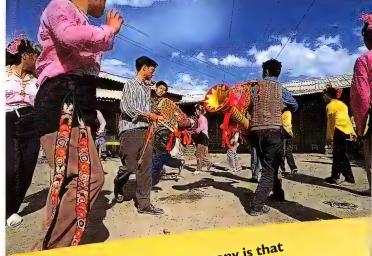
The girls shouted, "Xiaduo (Shy)! Xiaduo!" to the photographers, Mo xiaduo!"

The girls shouted, "Xiaduo (Shy)! Xiaduo!" No xiaduo!"

The girls shouted, "Xiaduo (Shy)! Xiaduo!" No xiaduo!"



- 1. A Nu man gets ready for hunting
- 2. A performance given at the market place by a group of Dai people
- Yu Jiankuan, the first Lisu man in the area to give the sword-ladder show
- 4. The Nujiang Canyon covered in snow



A major part of the wedding ceremony is that

the two families inform each other about their

expenditures for the wedding.

next morning.

When we went to the hot spring, hoping to take more pictures, the exciting scene could not be found any more.

Noticing our disappointment, a girl of the Bai ethnic minority, who travelled with us, said, "Today, I need to take a bath anyway, why don't you take pictures of me?" We were too grateful to say anything. In a pool under the cotton trees and amid the bombax flowers floating on the water, a beautiful girl was taking a bath. What a heavenly scene!

Gongshan: Young Lad with a Crossbow

Having bid farewell to the Bai girl, we drove up along the Nujiang River and soon reached a village high on the mountain. Outside the village, we met with a young man armed with a crossbow and a long sword.

Hunting used to be a custom of the ethnic minority people living in the Nujiang River valley. In recent years, due to the construction of highways, wild animals rarely come down the mountains, and, in addition, thanks to the local people's enhanced sense of environmental protection, crossbows and arrows have become mainly a decoration for young men.

Snow Scene in a Subtropical Gorge

The landscape on the way from Liuku to Gongshan was extremely charming. A heavy snow on the previous day had clothed the subtropical plants in silver. The black dots of village houses appeared and disappeared on the mountain slopes. Because of the snow and in order to enjoy the exotic scenery, it took us two days to finish the normally half a day's drive to reach Gongshan.

Street Dancing After Drinking

Over these two days, we got to know people of several ethnic groups in the area, including the Bai in Luobenzhuo, the Lisu in Lumadeng, the Nu in Bangdang, the Tibetans in Bingzhongluo and even the Drungs, who had just moved to the area from the deep valley of the Dulong River.

When we had dinner in Gongshan, the county seat, we tried a famous Lisus dish called "Xiakang" made of sliced Nujiang snow



leading to a hot spring. There, dozens of women were bathing seminaked in the hot water.

Though we had heard of such a situation previously, we still did not know where to turn upon seeing it with our own eyes. The women, however, did not look embarrassed in the least. On the contrary, they shouted at us playfully in unison, "Xiaduo! Xiaduo! (You are shy! shy!)" Only then did we come back to our senses. Pretending to be carefree, we shouted back, "Mo xiaduo! Mo xiaduo! (We aren't shy!)" while approaching them slowly. Our advance did not produce any resentment in them, and only the

younger girls pulled their towels up a little. We stood by the pool and talked with them. Then, we took pictures with an instant camera and gave their bathing pictures to them. They were overjoyed, and passed the pictures around happily.

The communal bathing reached its peak the next day because of the arrival of people from other villages. Early in the morning, the places with hot springs were packed to the full. While talking with the women we had got to know the previous day, we took a lot of pictures. Now and then, we helped them fill the cup of strong spirits which they were passing around. They drank the spirits and sang songs while bathing. Some of them called to us, "Come on, take a bath yourself!"

The local people believe that this bath at the beginning of the new year can not only wash away the hardships and bad luck of the past year, but can also prevent disease. In recent years, the communal bathing get together has also turned into a commodities fair. At the same time, the communal bathing has also become an important occasion for young men and women to get acquainted and begin a relationship.

It rained that evening, and the temperature turned a bit colder the

pheasant. It is first stir-fried and then boiled with liquor. After a few mouthfuls one's body is hot and one's face flushed. If the dish cools down, one needs only strike a match and light the alcohol in the dish to warm it. The Lisus are born drinkers. The two girls in our group seemed to feel nothing even after each had drunk 16 cups of the strong spirit. Moreover, they invited us to join them for Lisu dances on the street.

aspects of the wedding ceremony for He Zhanrong, the 25-year-old Lisu groom, and Feng Zhengjuan, his 22-year-old Nu bride. For instance, there were four people who were in overall charge, four people doing secretarial jobs, 10

Their singing immediately attracted many local people, who took it as part of their New Year celebrations, and the dancing crowd became bigger and bigger.

A Lisu Young Man Marries a Nu Girl

During the Spring Festival, outside visitors would often come across wedding ceremonies in the Nujiang area. We chanced upon such a wedding the second day after arriving at Gongshan.

When passed the village on our way to Bingzhongluo, we saw it bustling with activity and all the people were full of joy. We drove into the village, trying to quickly find out the reason and continue our journey. Yet, unexpectedly, we were kept there by the hospitable hosts — a wedding ceremony was being held.

On a wall of the bridegroom's house, a large piece of red paper was put up. Written on it was a list of people looking after various

cooks, and one master of ceremonies. It gave the impression that the whole business was well

organized.

One of those in overall charge asked to use our car to fetch the bride. We gladly agreed. The bride was in Yongkangga Village, three kilometres away across the Nujiang River.



We went with the bride-fetching party to the bride's home, where a certain time-consuming ceremony was held before the bride was let go. A capable representative of the bride's family told the groom's team in detail all the expenditure of the wedding. The same ritual was held again when the party got back to the groom's family. The only





They sang about their husbands
who had let them down, sang about their unfilial sons and daughters,
and sang about their past love stories.



difference was that the speaker and listeners had changed places.

At the Wedding Banquet: Trying Not to Drink

When the master of

ceremonies declared the couple was married, all the guests were enjoined to join the wedding banquet. There were so many people that tables were laid inside and outside the house, and even in the village square. We were regarded as distinguished guests and a VIP table was set up for us. The dishes were plentiful and delicious, not much different from a banquet in the cities. Moreover, a young man who could speak Mandarin fluently, was assigned to keep us company. Just before the banquet, one of our colleagues warned us in all seriousness: Once you touch the cups, you won't be able to leave the table sober.

So, we pretended to be very honest and told the hosts that we could not drink. But, the young man wouldn't let us go no matter what we said and obliged us to drink up the bamboo cups placed in front of us. His words were echoed by other people and, finally, we had to brace ourselves to drink the liquor in one gulp. We must have been quite a sight: Every one of us had a gaping mouth and tears running down from his eyes.

The night programme consisted of dancing around campfires, and film shows. Yet, by 4:00 p.m. some elderly women became unable to

suppress their excitement — they danced and sang loudly. They sang about their husbands who had let them down, sang about their unfilial sons and daughters, and sang about their past love stories. It was a great

pity that by this time we were pretty drunk and were hardly able to take pictures.

On our way home the next day, we passed the hot springs where the bathing gathering had been held. Seeing no one was in sight, the driver stopped the car, and all of us said in unison, "Let's go bathing." So, eight naked men jumped from one hot spring to another, washing off all the fatigue of the journey.

Tips for the Traveller

About the Nujiang River Canyon: Nujiang River originates in the southern foot hills of the Dangla Mountain and runs through Tibet, Yunnan, and Myanmar to reach the Indian Ocean. The Yunnan section of the river is flanked by mountains of 4,000-5,000 metres above sea level while its riverbed is only 800 metres above sea level. Hence the imposing canyon view.

Because of the difference in altitude, the weather in this area varies. When the riverside is in warm spring, the mountain top is still covered by snow. The average temperature is 20°C at the bottom and 10°C on the mountain.

The scenic area is abundant in timber, medicinal herbs, minerals and other mountain products.

Festival Activities of Various Ethnic Groups: This area is inhabited by several ethnic groups, including the Lisu, the Nu, the Drung, the Bai and the Tibetans, each having its own customs and festival celebrations.

- Communal Bathing (the 1st-3rd day of the Chinese New Year): Participated in
 by all nationalities living in the area; activities include: semi-nude bathing which is
 believed to be able to wash away diseases and bad luck; singing, dancing,
 visiting friends and relatives, and various games such as archery and swinging.
- Flower Festival of the Nu (the 15th day of the third lunar month): People gather
 at the Fairy Cave to hold various activities such as singing, dancing and picnicking
 for three days.





- New Year of the Drung (decided by each clan, usually in the last lunar month or January): People get together for three-five days. The major ceremony is to kill an ox for sacrifice.
- New Year of the Lisu (the last lunar month): Celebrations last for a month. The
 young men go hunting in the mountains while the older people visit each other,
 drinking and singing together.

Transport: There is a long-distance bus service with sleepers between Kunming and Liuku. The bus sets off at 7:00 p.m. from Kunming and arrives in Liuku at 2:00 p.m. the next day . Buses are available from Liuku to each county in the prefecture. To go to Drung River, one has to hire a horse, but please beware that the area is remote and the road is rough, and one needs a guide to go there.

Accommodation: The Liuku Hostel charges 100 yuan for a standard room. Hostels with standard rooms are also available in Fugong and Gongshan counties.

Food: Various dishes special to the local ethnic minorities. In county seats and towns, one can also find restaurants offering dishes of Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou cuisine. All the hostels provide their guests with meals.

- 1. A young Bai couple
- 2. The newly weds
- A Nu girl is on her way to her marriage to a Lisu man on the opposite bank of the river.
- 4. Film shows have become a popular part of the wedding programme.

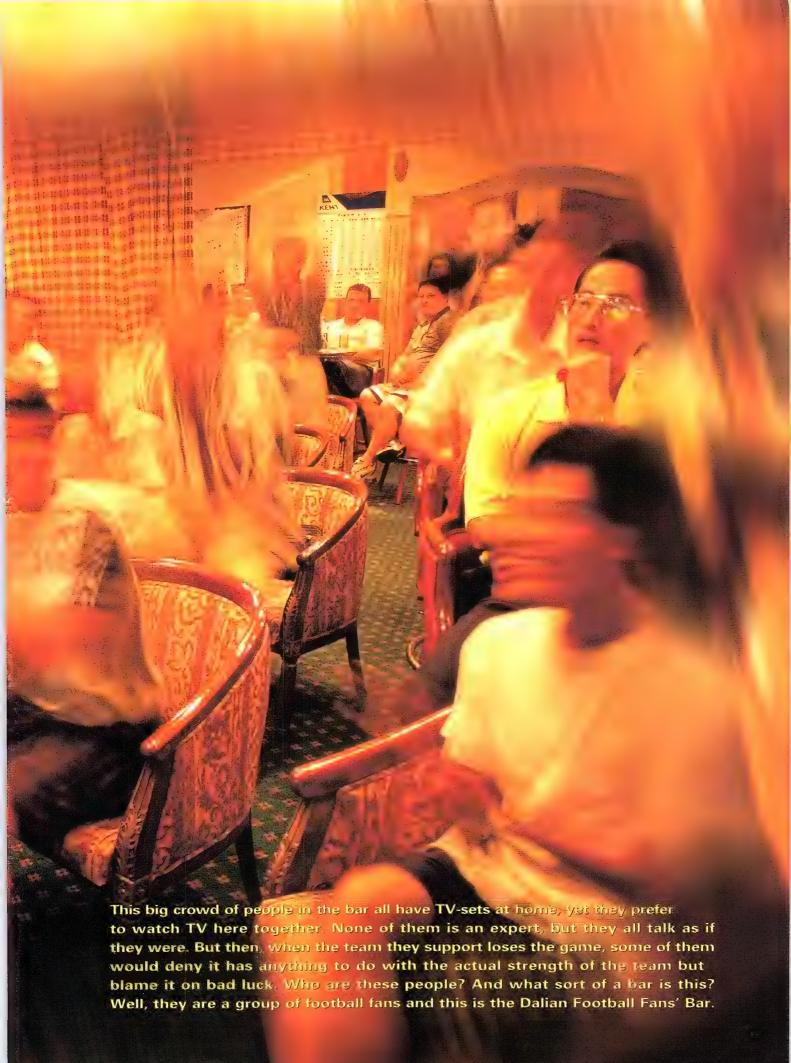


SPECIALITIES

Photos by Shan Xiaogang Article by Shan Xiaogang, Zhi Lang

2世 政治

OOTBALL FANS BAR IN DALIAN



THE BAR MANAGER EXPLAINS HIS DECISION

"Being a football fan myself, I know exactly how the fans feel. When my forecast of the scores proves correct, I would feel very pleased with myself and tell myself. I'm unique. So, I've decided to award all those who win in their forecasts with free drinks, as much as they like!"

There's going to be a game today. None of these people are staying home. They've all gone to the Football Fans' Bar to play their part as "experts".

Ever since the Professional Football League was launched in China, a new wave of football fever has caught on. Many provinces and cities have organized their own teams and for Dalian, it's a team named Wanda. The team is known as an unconquerable battalion. When I learned that Wanda was going to play the Taishan Team from Jinan today, I, being a football fan too, decided to join the crowd at the Bar.

A Strong Football Atmosphere

The Bar is located on the fourth floor of the Dalian International Hotel. You walk out of the elevator and there to greet you are the football stars of Brazil — in wall pictures, of course. As you stride down the corridor, you will find on either side of you photographs of such super stars as Diego Maradona, Roberto Baggio, Jürgen Klinsmann, the very incarnations of football, faces familiar to every football fan.

The bar room is not large, but comfortable, with several small, round tables. To one side of the platform is a big, blown-up football at least three feet in diametre, which no single person can embrace. The walls are again decorated with pictures of world football superstars. Top place, however, is given to stars of the Wanda Team, colour photos of the players and all kinds of souvenirs. The whole decor is such that even if you were not a football fan, you would feel like one sitting there.

I took a seat and asked for a glass of beer. From the manager I learned that the Bar was originally opened specifically for football fans among the hotel guests, but then many fans outside heard about it and came along, too. "All football fans are brothers!" he said. "I couldn't refuse any of them." Then more and more came and now you have to make seat reservations whenever

Wanda plays. And the place becomes packed if a football star shows up on site.

Early Arrivals Forecast Game's Result

There was still an hour to go before the game but the fans were already arriving at the Bar. Not that they got the time wrong. They came early with the deliberate intention of airing their views and giving their predictions of the game results as genuine experts would do. Now, this man here was definitely a super-fan for he carried a football wherever he went. The reason was it had on it the signatures of many football players, so naturally he regarded it as a treasure and always had it with him whenever he visited the Bar. But, he would never allow anyone else to touch it.

Not a few of the fans there were frequent visitors. Those already acquainted went right into long exchanges of views and information. Newcomers were not cold-shouldered. As soon as they offered their views, they would have supporters and opponents. So the Bar was kept noisy with everyone trying to speak at the same time. For instance, I heard this verbal battle at the next table:

Fan A: "There's no question Wanda will win. First of all, they have the advantage of being the host team. Secondly, they are just a stronger team!"

Fan B: "The Taishan side is not weak. They have in their ranks members of the national team, and have displayed good stamina recently."

Previous page: The patrons of the Football Fans' Bar: Whenever a goal is scored some are elated and others dejected.

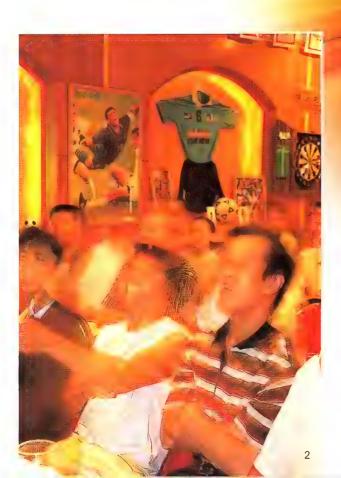
- Nowadays it really is all the rage to watch football in the bar.
- The lay-out in the bar has a hundred per cent football feel to it.
- 3. What football fan does not know Baggio or Klinsmann?













- When you watch a match with a glass of beer in your hand you feel great.
 A superb pass brings forth round after round of cheers from
- the fans.
- 3. There are all kinds of alcoholic beverages in the bar.
 4. The Football Fans' Bar is located in the Dalian International
- 5. Ever since China's professional football league was launched there has been a craze for football in the country.
- 6. Dalian football pitch.

LISTEN TO THE FANS TALK ABOUT THE BAR

A: "You have a totally different feeling when you watch a football match here with a glass of beer in your hand. Add to that the company of your "fellow fans" and the temperature mounts. Whenever one of the teams nets a goal, it makes your blood boil."

B: "The game is more exciting when you're watching with a whole bunch of people. If I watch the same game on television at home, I may doze off in the middle of it. But here, I can't keep still. I feel like charging into the field."



Fan C: "Hey, don't forget the ball is round. If one team is definitely going to win, what's the point of playing? We'll have to wait and see how they perform in the field today."

Fan D(female): "I'm for Wanda. Their team leader is just super!"

Fan A: "I think it's a 6:4 game and Wanda has the advantage!".....

The debate went on, with everybody arguing for their favourite team, their faces flushed with excitement. Such is the nature of football fans. Actually, it doesn't matter whether you know each other or not. If you're on the same side as me, you're a friend. Otherwise, you're an enemy.

Rooting for Each One's Favourite Team

At last, it was time for the kick off. With the sound of the umpire's whistle, the game got to a start. At the beginning, the game wasn't so heated and the fans seemed to be warming up, too. They chatted and laughed, looking quite relaxed. Before long, as the tension in the game rose and especially when the game centred around the goal, the atmosphere became more serious and tense with the emotions rising and falling with the passing of the ball. Every good kick brought forth a round of cheers, either from the attacking side or the defending side. Any misjudgement by the referee would cause much indignation.

Ready to Charge into the Field

The game continued. With one goal in, the tempo of the game stepped up and more attempts were made to shoot. Cheers and sighs among the fans followed, wave after wave. Now, the more impatient ones were

leaning forward in their seats, their eyes glued to the screen, their palms wet with sweat. They kept stamping their feet on the floor as though they were ready to charge into the field to save the day. Those rooting for Wanda were now full of confidence and talking even with a tone of arrogance while supporters of the Taishan Team, which was lagging behind, kept silent, but were secretly rooting for their players to launch a counter-offensive and turn the situation round. While the players were fighting it out on the field, there was no question but that a battle of another kind was going on right here in the Bar.

The Wanda Team, renowned for its invulnerability and benefitting from being the host team, had all the advantages to its side. The whistle blew. Wanda had won the game with the brilliant score of 3:0. The fans jumped for joy, cheering and embracing one another, even those whom they'd met for the first time but who held the same view as themselves.

Although the game had ended, the fans' spirit had not in the least subsided. With beer in hand, they reviewed the game, commenting on the merits and errors of each side, their deployment and performance, in the tone of football experts.

In the end, one fan, whose forecast had been proven correct, now predicted that the Chinese team would surely be able to enter the next World Cup finals. We have yet to see how accurate is his latest prediction.

Tips for the Tourist

Bar's location: Fourth Floor of Dalian International Hotel, No.539 Changjiang Road, Dalian For reservations, call 0411-3628888 ext.3333, 3334

MASTERPIECES OF ART — CHAOZHOU EMBROIDERED TAPESTRIES

were

Photos by Huang Yanhong Article by Zhi Lang

leaping out of the tapestry. This effect was achieved by a method known as "gold sewed upon pad", and the scales of the dragons were made by a method called "double needlework" both of which were invented in the late Qing

Dynasty. The use of both gold and silver threads enhanced the prominence of the dragons in the composition. Chaozhou tapestries are often used as backdrops to wedding ceremonies, and tailored into bedding, clothing and stage costumes.

Also in the display room was a framed tapestry of a bowl of fruit, which showed a totally different style of Chaozhou embroidery. The grapes were given a limpid tone, and the lychees were shown in all the different hues of a ripening red. I was particularly struck by the lychee and pineapple skins, which looked so real that one could hardly tell they were made of thread. I was told that the lychees were sewn by adopting a special method using geometric patterns. Apparently there are over a hundred methods involved in Chaozhou embroidery, including padding, pasting, piecing together, patching, inlaying and highlighting. Different patterns or subjects require different methods.

At one workshop, I saw women working so intently on their embroidery that they did not even notice that I was photographing them. I took a close look at what they were doing. Some pieces were the results of the combined labour of several artisans. It seemed that dragons, phoenixes and other animals were the most common subjects demanded currently by their customers.

The prices of the products displayed varied according to the materials and methods used. Tapestries like the Nine-Dragon Screen cost nearly 10,000 yuan, while others could cost as little as several hundred yuan each.

Translated by F. Huang



An embroidered tapestry of a bowl of fruit



Embroidery work requires the utmost devotion and concentration.

When I visited Kaiyuan Temple in Chaozhou, I was attracted by a Buddhist tapestry displayed there. It was five metres wide and as tall as a two-storey building. What struck me more was the vividness of the images embroidered on it, such as dragons, cranes and pheasants. The particular methods used in the embroidery made the animals appear three-dimensional. Not only that, but the gold thread also gave a brilliance to the existing colours.

Design on the

Nine-Dragon

Screen

Chaozhou embroidery is a branch of the Guangdong school of the same art. It is produced in Chaozhou and Shantou in Guangdong Province.

In the display room of the First Embroidery Centre I saw a large tapestry called Nine-Dragon Screen, about three metres wide. The nine dragons depicted protruded from the background as if they

World Gardening Fair, Kunming

France recently signed a letter of intent with Southwest China's Yunnan Province to participate in the '99 World Gardening Fair to be held May 1-October 31 in Kunming, capital of the province. So far, 42 countries have expressed their intention to take part in the world's top gardening exhibition.

More Bengal Tigers, Tibet

Extensive research has revealed that the Tibet Autonomous Region is currently home to more than 30 Bengal tigers. The species is under first-class state protection and has been listed as one of the world's most endangered species.

The number of Bengal tigers in Tibet fell to 10 after 1987, and they were mostly found in Medog and Zayu counties. But the latest research on wildlife resources reveals that while the number of tigers in Zayu County remains stable, the number found in Medog County has risen dramatically to two dozen. Tigers, known to be at the end of the food chain, breed only once every three years, and the survival rate for the species is guite low. The region opened a state nature reserve in Medog in 1961, and a regional nature reserve in Zayu in 1985. Regulations governing the protection of wildlife have been introduced and enforced. The sharp increase in the number of tigers in the area also indicates that tigers from neighbouring countries and districts have migrated into the region because of environmental deterioration in their former habitats.

Century-old Liquor, Liaoning

More than four tons of liquor, produced more than 150 years ago, was unearthed

recently from a cave in Jinzhou, Liaoning Province. The century-old spirits have been proved to be made of red sorghum and millet and are safe to drink. Winemaking experts and archaeologists agree that the yellow-coloured drink was made by a special brewery as a tribute to the imperial court. The liquor was sold at 1,500 yuan (US\$180) per 50-gram bottle and buyers also received a gold-plated commemorative coin and a card.

Embroidery Piece, Jiangsu

A huge embroidery piece measuring 11 metres long and 0.65 metre wide has been recently completed in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province. The piece features the full text of The Art of War, a military classic by Sun Zi, a master strategist of more than 2,000 years ago. All the 6,000 characters of the book are in the hand of the late calligrapher Cheng Keda. It was finished by six craftsmen who had worked on it for six months.

Green Campaign in Tarim, Xinjiang

Tarim Oilfield is China's most promising oil and gas powerhouse for the next century. In the eight years since it was established, the headquarters of the oilfield has poured more than 420 million yuan (US\$50.6 million) into environment protection of the area. The headquarters has formulated a dozen environmental protection regulations, which include management methods regarding environmental protection during petroleum drilling and processing to steer the protection work at the grassroots on the oil and gas fields. Also, an environment assessment system has been observed in the design and implementation of any construction

projects on the fields so as to curb any possible pollution sources.

Qingdao Ocean Park, Shandong

China's biggest ocean park is being built in Qingdao, a coastal city in Shandong Province. The park, covering a land area of 52 hectares and a water area of 100 hectares, has attracted an investment of 660 million yuan (US\$80 million). The ocean park will also serve as a seaside resort. Roads around the park and other infrastructure projects have been finished.

Mount Dahua, Anhui

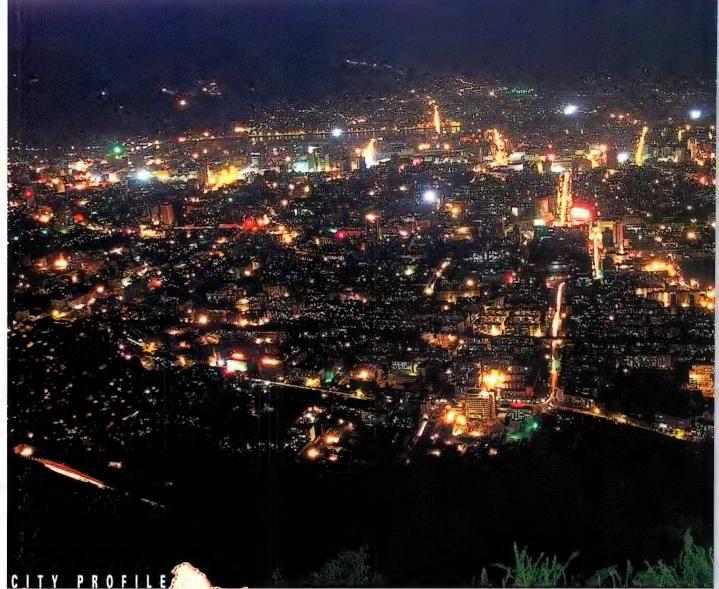
Another mountain in Anhui Province, where the famous Huangshan is located, has been built into a tourist resort and opened to the public. Yunfeng Temple, a major attraction in Mt. Dahua is the largest temple of its kind in East China. It has 10 halls and was constructed with imposing grandness and highly-developed artistic level. More scenic spots will be eventually opened in this area.

Boost Tourism Through the Silk Road, Gansu

Gansu Province will boost its tourism with the ancient Silk Road as the focus. Gansu, through which 1,655 kilometres of the ancient Silk Road go, boasts a lot of historical sites such as the Dunhuang Grottoes, ruins of ancient cities, temples and graves. The province plans to reduce prices of tickets, transportation and hotels by 20-50 percent so as to attract more tourists. Gansu has also vowed to improve its facilities and increase scenic spots. About 2 million yuan (US\$240,000) will be spent in 1998 to improve tourist infrastructure.

AND A CITY ON THE YELLOW RIVER

Photos by Shi Baoxiu Article by Gloria Shang, He Xiaozu

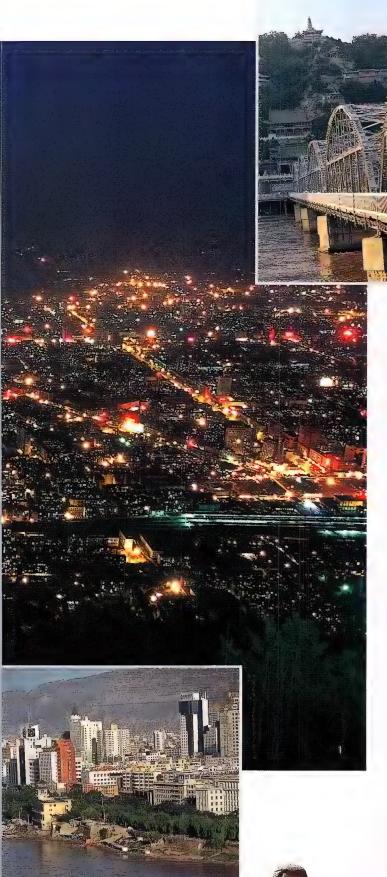


A careful map reader would find that Lanzhou, capital of Northwest China's Gansu Province, is actually situated at the centre of the Chinese territory.

A further study would lead to an even more surprising fact: The distance between Lanzhou and the Heixiazi Island of the easternmost Chinese territory in Northeast China's Heilongjiang Province is 2,400 kilometres, while the distance betweenthe westernmost Uzbek Pass in Xinji ang and this northwestern city is exactly the same. But this is not all! If you measure the distance between Lanzhou

and the northernmost Chinese village, Mohe, and that between Lanzhou and the southernmost city, Sanya, on Hainan Island, you would get the same figure - 2,100 kilometres. And so, Lanzhou's position at the centre of the vast Chinese territory is undoubted.





Situated on the upper reaches of the Yellow River, the city of Lanzhou was developed in the valley created by the river, with the yellow water flowing through it. The fertile valley land and the hills on the banks have made it abound in fruits, such as pears, peaches, honeydew melons and *mapi* melons.

Lanzhou is a spacious city, with more than 13,000 square kilometres under its jurisdiction, and an urban area of 1,631 square kilometres. Of its 2.83 million people, only 1.4 million are city dwellers. The city's well-planned urban development is highlighted by its five major streets, which, all broad and straight, run parallel from west to east.

An Ancient Frontier Town

Lanzhou was officially established as a city in 1941, but the history of this ancient frontier town is much longer. It is the birthplace of the Coloured Pottery Culture of the New Stone Age and an important source of the Chinese civilisation.

In early Chinese history, before the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods, the area was inhabited by ethnic minorities, the Qiang and the Rong. After the western expedition headed by General Meng Tian of the Qin Dynasty in 215 B.C., the area was merged into the Qin territory and was put under the administration of Longxi Prefecture. The importance of Lanzhou's position increased during the West Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 24), after the Silk Road was opened by the Han envoy Zhang Qian. The town was then no longer only a horse and tea market in China's northwest but became a shipping port and trading centre between the East and the West.

However, the most vital role Lanzhou played lay in its geographic importance: it was a fortress of the Han Empire. In the year 81, the Han court established a prefecture here and named it Jincheng, which literally means "a city hard to attack". Lanzhou became the provincial capital of Gansu in 1666 during the Kangxi reign of the Qing Dynasty. The establishment of a city was planned in the 1920s. However, the continuous and serious drought disasters over the following years (which reduced the town's population to only 8,600) made this impracticable.

A Communications Hub on the Eurasian Bridge

The roles Lanzhou plays today far surpass those in its previous history. The modern city is an important industrial, commercial, cultural and tourist centre, as well as a bridge linking the northwestern part of China with the rest of the country.

- Lanzhou at night, viewed from the top of Lanshan Hill
 The Yellow River Bridge and the White Pagoda
 - The ancient urban area on the northern bank, and the new district opposite it
 - A statue signifying the Yellow River as
 the mother of the Chinese nation

It is a communications hub where several railways connect, including the Longhai, which goes from Gansu's Tianshui all the way through to the coastal city Lianyungang in East China's Jiangsu Province, the Lanzhou-Xinjiang Railway, the Lanzhou-Qinghai Railway and the Lanzhou-Baotou Railway running to Inner Mongolia. Every day, 72 trains set off from or pass through here, carrying 4.6 million passengers. Lanzhou's West Station is an important freight shipping centre of Northwest China and one of the major container relay centres on the new Eurasian Bridge, with an annual handling capacity of 9 million tons. Lanzhou is connected with other domestic and foreign cities by more than 30 airlines. And the state highways passing through Lanzhou make it easy to set out from there to Shanghai, Yining, Beijing, Lhasa, Sichuan and Yunnan by automobile.

An Industrial and Commercial Centre in the Northwest

Lanzhou's first modern enterprise, a wool textile company, was founded by Zuo Zongtang, a late Qing court official who promoted China's industrialisation. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Central Government has invested heavily to build a cluster of industrial projects, changing the ancient town into an important industrial base complete with various industries, including oil, chemistry, machinery, metallurgy, woollen textiles, medicine and leather, in addition to power, coal mining and building materials. Many of Lanzhou's products occupy a vital proportion of the country's total output. For example, Lanzhou produces 70 percent of the nation's concentrated nitric acid, 38 percent of its synthetic rubber, 25 percent of its persilicite, 80 percent of its oil-drilling machines, and one-third of the graphite electrode. In addition, Lanzhou produced the first synthetic heart valves in China, and its sale volume of a.c. generators is 40 percent of the country's total.

The past few years have also seen rapid development of light industries and commerce in Lanzhou. The city has become one of the nation's major wholesale markets for 10 categories of goods, including metals, furs, medicinal herbs, and cloth. A group of modern shopping centres has also been built, and several commercial streets established. In 1996, the volume of commodities circulating in Lanzhou reached 33 billion yuan. It is earmarked to become the commercial centre of Northwest China by 2005.

Meanwhile, economic reform is under way. Fifty percent of its 2,500 state-owned enterprises have adopted new ownership and managerial systems such as stock holding, co-operation, or contract-lease management. By 1999, the city plans to raise its GDP to 29.5



billion yuan, with an annual growth rate of 9 percent; the average income of its city dwellers will reach 4,600 yuan, while that of the farmers will be 2,200 yuan.

A Strong Scientific and Technological Base

With its strong heavy industry, Lanzhou is rich in human resources, and its comprehensive scientific and technological strength ranks the ninth among Chinese cities. It has 100,000 trained personnel working in various scientific and technological fields, and 653 research institutes. Many of their researches, such as desert control, plateau atmospheric, salt lake and grassland ecological studies, lead those of the nation, or even the world.

The Ningwozhuang Hi-tech Development Zone occupies an area of 18 square kilometres. More than 200 of the 395 companies operating there are high-technological institutes, 52 of them being foreign-funded. Now the infrastructure projects have been finished and its 54-storey Science and Technology Building will soon be completed. In addition, a 10-sq.-km. economic and technological development zone is also under construction.





TOURING LANZHOU: SEEING THE RIVER AND TRACING HISTORY

The Yellow River Iron Bridge

There are a dozen or so bridges over the Yellow River in Lanzhou. But none of them can challenge the landmark position of the Yellow River Iron Bridge, the oldest of them all.

What makes this iron bridge special is its long history. The first pontoon over the Yellow River at Lanzhou was built in 1372 during the Ming Dynasty. It was moved to the present position in 1385. The ancient pontoon was built on 24 large ships which anchored on the river in line, five metres apart. On these ships were laid planks and railings. On each bank of the river, four iron columns and 45 wooden pillars were planted, and two thick, 50-metre-long iron cables were used to fasten the ships to the columns. The pontoon would be removed in winter when the river froze, and reinstalled in spring when the ice melted.

In 1907 the Qing Dynasty hired a German company to change the pontoon into an iron bridge. In 1954, the Chinese government renovated the bridge and added steel arches to make it stable.

Waterwheels

It is amazing to see waterwheels, which are common in southern China, standing on a northwestern highland. According to historical records, the device was imported from the south by Duan Xu, a native of Lanzhou who served as a Qing Dynasty imperial official in southern China.

Such a waterwheel is usually 20 metres in diameter, and has 40-50 wooden ruts installed around it. When the river water rises 15-18 metres, the ruts turn over and the water runs through a channel into the fields. Waterwheels became widespread in Gansu and the neighbouring Yellow River provinces, and it is said that during 1930s-40s, in the suburbs of Lanzhou alone there were as many as 160 waterwheels. Unfortunately, only a couple of these ancient energy-saving and pollution-free devices remain.

Sheep-skin Rafting

This was the main means of transportation on the Yellow River until the 1950s. The earliest record of people using sheep-skin rafts was in A.D. 47 during the Han Dynasty. A large-size raft is made of more than 600 sheep-skin bags, all air-filled and sealed. It can carry 20-30 tons of freight and is mainly for long-distance shipping. A small raft is made of



a dozen sheep-skin bagsand is good for short-distance shipping and for ferrying between the banks. The interesting point is that a sheepskin raft can only drift down the river. So, after it reaches its destination on a lower reach of the river, it has to be carried back by land.

Floating down the Yellow River on a sheepskin raft has become a popular tourist attraction these days.

Memorial Museum of the Eighth Route Army

Located in Huzhu Lane, Jiuquan Road, this residential courtyard used to house the offices of the Eighth Route Army representatives in Lanzhou during the War of Resistance Against Japan. In the exhibition room, more than 200 historical documents and 90 items are displayed.

Gansu Provincial Museum

Located in Xijin Road West, this is a comprehensive local museum, built in 1956. Included in its collection are 75,000 relics and natural specimens, including coloured pottery of the New Stone Age, Handynasty wooden tablets, Buddhist statues of various periods, etc. The museum exhibitions include "Historical Relics of Gansu", "Natural Resources of Gansu", "Tomb Murals of Jiayuguan", and fossils of ancient Yellow River elephants.

Coloured-Pottery Cultural Sites

Caojianzui Ruins is located in Shatanmo Village in Qilihe District. A

- 1. A bowling alley
- 2. Inside the Ya'ou Shopping Centre
- 3. Lanzhou has a booming textile industry. (by Wu Pingguan)
- 4.Ya'ou Eateries & Amusement Centre

pottery kiln was discovered here together with a coloured pottery plate and a red pottery pot.

The Xipogua Ruins are located in Lujiagou Village of Qilihe District. Unearthed here were residential caves and kilns. Among the relics discovered are fragments of pottery, stone and bone instruments, and ornamental articles such as rings and pearls.

Both ruins belong to the Majiayao Culture and are under the protection of the provincial government.

Xigu Walled City

Located in Xigu District, it was bullt as a fortress in 1082 to fight against the Western Xia army during the Song Dynasty and renovated in 1499-1503 during the Ming Dynasty.

Ming Dynasty Great Wall and Watch Towers

During the Ming Dynasty, a 100-kilometre wall was built on the southern bank of the Yellow River at Lanzhou. Three sections of the wall remain in Xigu District. The longest of them is located in Fanjiaping. The other two sections are located in Xigu and Liangjiawan respectively.

Many watch towers in Lanzhou serve as witnesses of the city's frontier role in ancient times. Six of them built during the Ming Dynasty are located in Xigu District. Most of them are trapezoidal, their heights varying from four to seven metres. Fires were set at the top of a tower when invading enemies were observed so as to give smoke signals.

Five Spring Mountain

This scenic area lies to the south of Lanzhou. Its fame relates to a legend, according to which in A.D. 120, a Han Dynasty general Huo Qubing commanded an expedition to the west. When his men were camping in the area, they suffered a water shortage. General Huo wielded his horse whip five times, and five springs poured out.

Around each spring, halls, gates and pavilions have been built, and the whole area is covered with luxuriant vegetation. At Kuangguan Tower, one can have a panoramic view of Lanzhou. Every year, on the eighth day of the fourth lunar month, a mountain fair is held here, during which thousands of potted plants are exhibited. The mountain is also a place where local people gather during major festivals for recreational activities and folk performances.

White Pagoda Mountain

On the northern bank of the Yellow River, this mountain is 1,700 metres above sea level. Several fortresses were built at its foot in ancient times. Buildings scattered on its three terraces are of



Dynasty in memory of a famous Tibetan monk. It is said that when Genghis Khan fought to unify China, he wrote to the leading Monk of Tibetan Buddhism, who in response sent a follower to see the Khan. Unfortunately, the envoy died on his way to see the Mongolian ruler. A pagoda was then ordered to be built. Painted white, the seven-



storey octagonal pagoda stands 17 metres tall.

A lantern fair is held on the mountain every year during the Spring Festival (Chinese New Year) and other traditional festivals.



FOR YOUR REFERENCE

How to Get There

Lanzhou is connected with major Chinese cities by airlines. Travellers in China can fly to Lanzhou from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou or Xi'an. If one is already in Xi'an, Baotou, or Ningxia, one can also take a train to get there.

Where to Stay

Lanzhou has hotels of various grades to meet the demands of different customers.

Lanzhou Legend Hotel ****

- •Tel: (931) 888 2876 •Fax: (931) 888 7876
- •Add: 599 Tianshui Road, Lanzhou

Lanzhou Jincheng Hotel ***

- •Tel: (931) 641 6638/ 882 7759 •Fax: (931) 841 8438
- •Add: 363 Tianshui Road, Lanzhou •Postcode: 730000

Friendship Hotel ***

- •Tel: (931) 233 3051 Fax: (931) 233 0304
- •Add: 16 Xize Road West, Lanzhou •Postcode: 730050

Local Delicacy and Restaurants

Lanzhou is famous for its spicy beef noodles. The first beef noodle



restaurant was opened in Lanzhou in the 1940s. Today, this local delicacy has become so popular that in big cities you can also easily find a food stand to taste it.

The best place to taste Lanzhou beef noodles is Feicui Muslim Restaurant (Feicui Tower), which offers all kinds of beef noodles and more than 200 varieties of local snacks. Tel: 886 1498; Add: 410 Pingliang Road North.

Longcui Restaurant provides dishes of traditional Gansu cuisine. Tel: 846 2498; Add: 291 Zhongshan Road.

Longchun Tower, located in the back yard of the Gongmao Shopping Centre, offers hot pot and local specialities. Tel: 888 5622.

Specialities

Carved Gourd and Pebble A special species of gourd is grown in Lanzhou. In the 1920s, the local artists began to carve legendary figures and calligraphy on the gourds and eventually developed gourd-carving into a unique handicraft.

Pebbles on the shore of the Yellow River can also be made into beautiful art works. Using the natural shape and colours of the pebble, the artist carves it into a vivid legendary figure or an animal.

Lanzhou Lily (Lilium davidii) Bulb The bulbs of the Lanzhou lily are especially white and big, with an average weight of 350 grams each. They contain rich nourishment and trace elements. Their protein content is as much as five times that of the tomato. Fresh bulb petals

are good for making dishes and soup. According to traditional Chinese medicine, Lanzhou lily bulbs are effective in treating various diseases.

Lanzhou White Melon Lanzhou's unique topography and weather make it a good melon producer. Of its many species of melon, Bailan (Lanzhou White) is the best and most famous.

Folklore

Qinqiang Opera This is a local opera form popular in Gansu and Shaanxi provinces,

and Lanzhou is considered a base for the art. Qinqiang appeared in the late Yuan and early Ming dynasties and originated from local folk songs.

Lanzhou Drums (Guzi) This is a local ballad singing popular in the Lanzhou area. A show can be performed by one, two or three singers, and is usually given in teahouses, restaurants and bars. Historical stories and legends are told through singing, and a long



story is often divided into many chapters.

Climate

Located on the Yellow Loess Plateau, Lanzhou has a temperate continental climate, with a yearly average temperature of 10 °C. While its sunshine hours reach 2607.7, its annual precipitation is only 327.7 mm.

Average Temperature of Lanzhou

Mor	1. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
°C	-6.8	-2.1	5.5	12	17	20.7	22.6	21.2	16.1	9.8	1.6	-5.4

Major Travel Services

China International Travel Service, Gansu

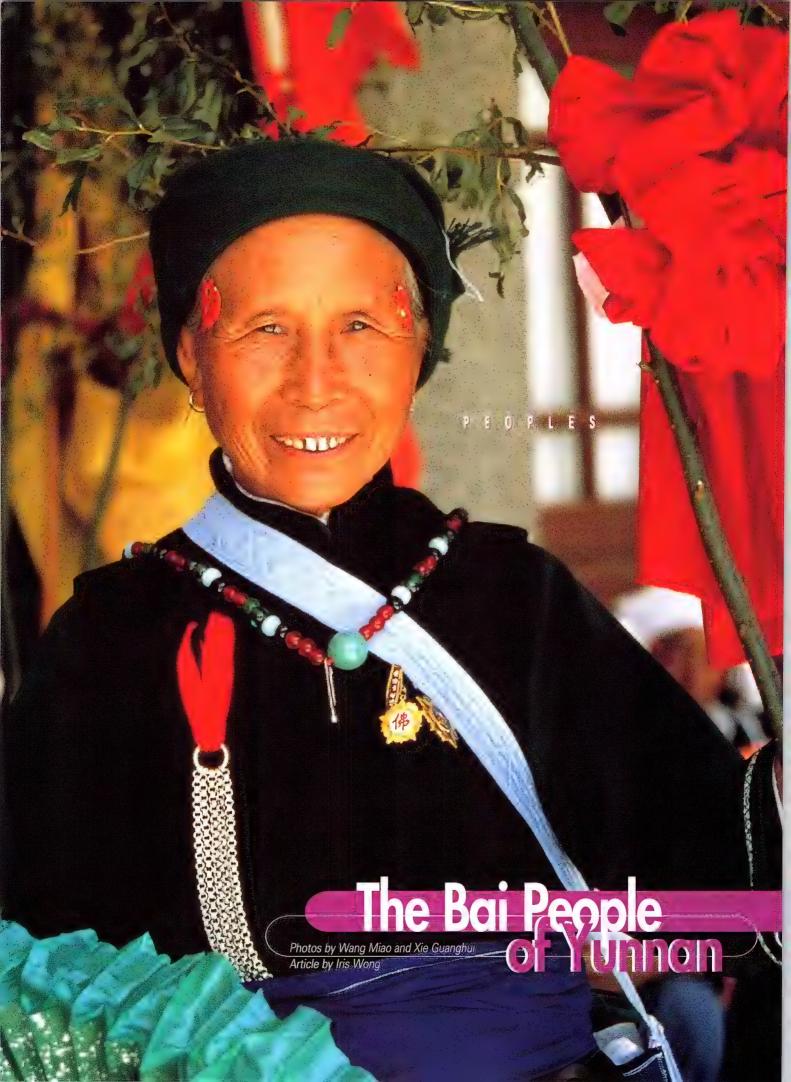
- •Tel: (931) 882 6181 •Fax: (931) 841 8556
- •Add: 361 Tianshui Road, Lanzhou •Postcode: 730000

Gansu Silk Road International Tours

- •Tel: (931) 882 7098 •Fax: (931) 841 8457
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- 1. At the fertilizer plant of Lanzhou Chemical Industry Co. (by Liu Yanzhi)
- 2. One of Lanzhou's products bailan melons
- 3. Waterwheels in Waterwheel Park by the Yellow River
- 4. The front gate of Lanshan park
- Rafting on the Yellow River on a sheep-skin boat like this is a popular tourist attraction. (by Xie Guanghui)
- 6. Yingbin Hotel



The Bai people, one of China's ethnic minorities, call themselves Bai Zi or Bai Ni, both meaning "the Bai people". Most of the one million Bais live in the Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture in the northwestern part of Yunnan Province, which includes the counties of Dali, Dengchuan, Fengyi, Eryuan, Yunlong, Jianchuan and Heqing. Known for its beautiful natural scenery, this area is fondly called the "Oriental Switzerland". A smaller number of the Bai people are scattered in Sichuan's Xichang and Guizhou's Bijie areas.

The Bai people settled in the area around Lake Erhai in the

northwestern part of Yunnan as long as more than 2,000 years ago. The Dali Kingdom (937-1253), a political regime controlled mainly by the Duan family, ruled the Bai area during the Han people's Song Dynasty. As a vassal state, it carried uninterrupted economic and cultural exchange with the imperial Song court. Even today, traditions

characteristic of the Tang and Song dynasties still exist in many aspects of the Bai people's life.

Life Style

The Bai people are engaged mainly in agriculture. The area where they live is located on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau. Its western part, with the Lancang and Nujiang rivers flowing through it from north to south, is an area of dense forests. Its eastern part, with the Jinsha (Golden Sand) River traversing it from west to east, is open countryside. The area around Lake

Erhai to the southwest of the river, in particular, is favoured by a mild climate and rich soil, where crops ripen twice a year. Among its produce are rice, wheat, beans, corn, cotton, rape seeds, sugarcane and tobacco, which make the area known as a land of grain and oil. The pears of Dali, oranges of Binchuan and Tuo tea of Xiaguan are famous local products.

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Other than agriculture, the Bai area also abounds in marble, timber, herbal medicines and animal skins. The white Dali marble with pink, green, pale blue, emerald and creamy yellow veins, which make the stone look like misty landscape paintings,

is a highly valued building material. The marble quarried and processed by the Bai people is most favoured by architects.

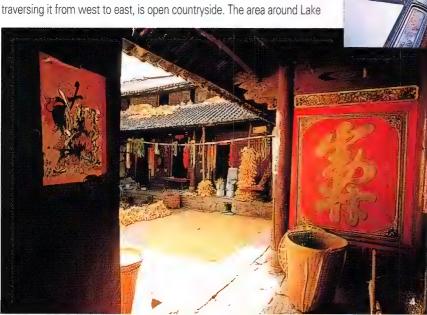
Clothing

The clothes worn by the Bai men are not much different from those of the Han people. But women's clothes still retain



some age-old traditions and include a scarf, a jacket short at the front and long at the back, a removable collar, an apron, loose trousers and embroidered shoes. The edges of the apron, sleeves and trousers are usually bordered with embroidered designs. Married, middle-

- 1. An elderly woman (by Wang Miao)
- 2. The opening ceremony of the Third Month Festival (by Chen Keqin)
- 3. The house of a Bai family (by Xie Guanghui)
- 4. Bai residential houses (by Wang Miao)



aged and old women prefer darker colours, such as blue and black, while young women like clothes of bright and strongly contrasting colours.

In hair-style, married, middle-aged and older women usually arrange their hair in a bun and cover it with a scarf. Girls braid their hair and coil it on the head. It is a popular fashion for the Bai girls in Heging and Jianchuan to cover their hair with a green scarf, tie it

with a string of roseor emerald-coloured velvety balls and attach a colourful handkerchief to the lapel.

Food

In addition to rich agricultural produce and special products,

Lake Erhai and Sword Lake yield an abundance of fish, including bow fish and the rare oil fish and Bingxue fish, which are served on the table

of the Bai people all the year round.

Dwelling

The Bai people are highly skilled in architecture. The Three Pagodas of Dali and other Buddhist temples are examples of superb architectural art. The residential houses of the Bai people are built in different styles: One main and two side buildings - a main building is flanked by two side buildings; three buildings and a screen wall - a courtyard is enclosed by buildings on three sides and a screen wall in front; a compound of four houses and five courtyards - the four houses on the four sides leave spaces at the centre and the four corners. Most of the residential houses are two-storey, brick and wood buildings linked by a long passage. The roof

and the top of the walls are usually built with upturned eaves, which not only serve a decorative purpose but also facilitate drainage of rain water.

The gate structures of the Bai people's houses are most elaborately decorated. Their upturned eaves are decorated on both sides with ornamental flying fish. Even the stone foundation is carved on the front side with lion heads. It is a tradition for the Bai people to paste couplets written on paper on the front gates of their houses. The doors, windows, walls, living rooms and gardens are often decorated with calligraphy of classic poems and landscape paintings.

Language

The Bai language belongs to the Yi branch of the Tibetan-Burmese group of the Han-Tibetan family of languages. As the Bai people have been continually assimilated by the Han people throughout history and as they like to learn from the more advanced culture of the Han people, there is a large number of Han words in the Bai language, and the Han written language has long been the popular written language of the Bai people.

Marriage

The Bai people practise monogamy, though there are exceptional cases of polygamy. Men and

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women of the same clan or bearing the same surname generally do not marry each other. But children of the father's sister or mother's brother are preferred marriage partners. In the past, marriage was in most cases arranged by the parents. Only families of the same social status were to tie the knot, and the bridegroom had to give the bride's family expensive betrothal gifts.

On the wedding day, besides entertaining friends and relatives, there is the tradition of "pinching the bride". Upon arriving at her new home, the bride has to present a pair of shoes to each of her husband's parents, brothers, sisters, sistersin-law and their children as a gift on their first

meeting. The newly-weds have to drink a cup of bitter tea and then a cup of sweet tea to symbolise that their days together will be increasingly more joyous. The new couple also have to drink a cup of wine with hot pepper in it. This is because in the Bai language, the word "hot" is pronounced the same as "intimate". The cup of hot wine, therefore, expresses a wish for the newlyweds to love each other and always be of one heart.

Religion

The Bai people believe in Buddhism. As there are Buddhist temples and monasteries everywhere in the area where they





live, the Bai area is called "an ancient Buddhist state". Some of the Bai people worship the Primal Lord, the equivalent of a village god.

Festivals

The Third Month Festival, also known as the Goddess of Mercy Festival, is a grand day of festivity as well as a market day for the Bai people. Celebrations are held at the foot of Tiancang Mountain west of the city of Dali between the 15th and 20th days of the third lunar month. The festival was at first religious in

nature, but it has gradually become a grand gathering and fair. In addition to trade, there are also dance performances, horse races and sports competitions.

The Torch Festival, which falls on the 25th day of the sixth lunar month, is a grand occasion for the Bai people to express their wish for a rich harvest and prosperity. On the festival night, there will be a torch burning at the front door of each house and large public torches at the entrance to the village. The torches are decorated with red and green banners with auspicious words written on them. The villagers also hold a torch parade in the fields to kill the vermin and to sing and dance to their hearts' content.

Basic, Folk and Han tunes. The music is usually brisk, passionate, bold and full of variations. The Bai opera, Chuichuiqiang (Blowing Melody), is a synthetic art with the characteristics of folk music and dance. Much favoured by the Bai people, this Bai opera has drawn on the merits of Han operas and is sung to more than 20 different colourful tunes. Except for the Chuichuiqiang which is accompanied by the suona horn, all the other tunes are accompanied by *sanxian*, a three-stringed plucked instrument and tree-leaf mouth organ.

Funeral

THE BAI PEOPLE OF YUNNA

A long time ago the Bai people used to cremate their dead. Influenced by the Han people, they later changed to burials. The funeral is usually a solemn occasion, especially when the dead are over 70 years old. Villagers who come to mourn often carry with them a dish of rice or wheat flour as a gift.

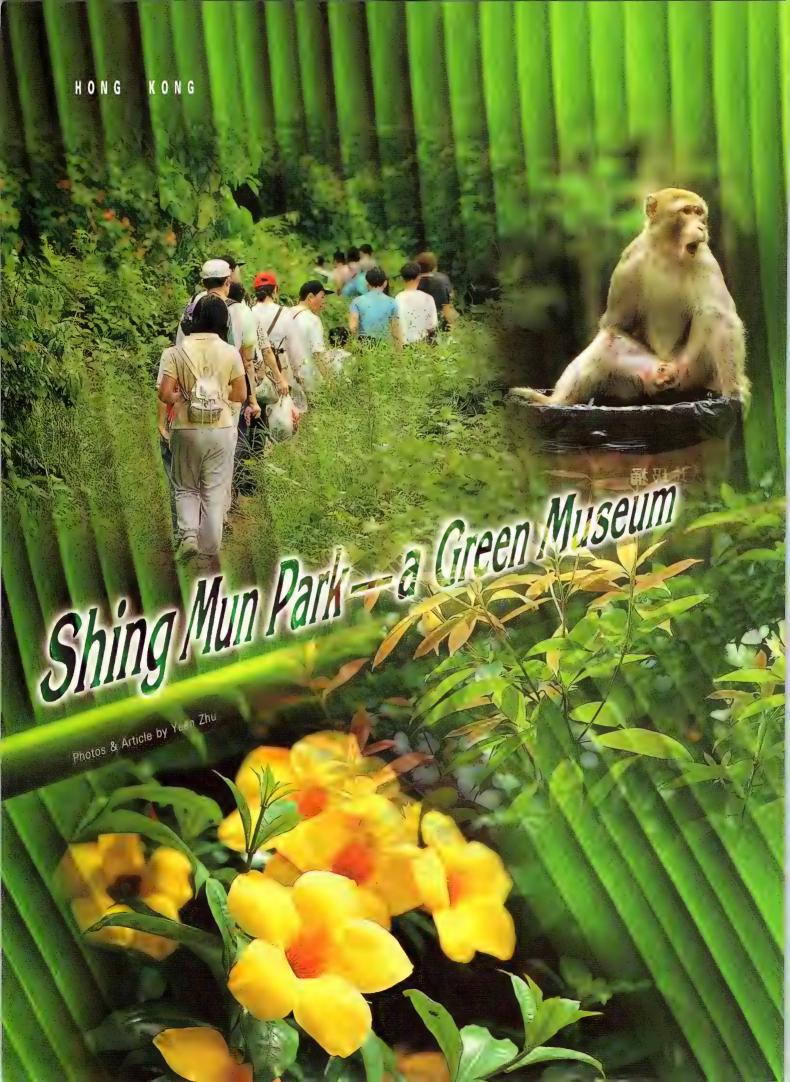


- Preparing sandaocha, a special tea of the Bai people (by Gao Zhiqiang)
- 2. Child of the Bai ethnic group (by Wang Miao)
- A shop selling traditional Bai costumes (by Xie Guanghui)
- Dowry presented at the wedding (by Ou Yansheng)

There are other festivals, such as Circling the Three Spirits and Gathering on Water for holding regattas, freeing captive animals and other activities.

Song and Dance

The Bai people are natural singers. Antiphonal singing is a popular folk activity held by the Bai people everywhere, while they are gathering firewood, planting rice or fishing on a boat. The lyrics are generally impromptu. There are mainly three tunes: Grand







A Pirate's Stockaded Village

A climb up a flight of stone steps at Bo Law (Pineapple) Dam brings you to the southern bank of Shing Mun Reservoir. The reservoir is deep and narrow, surrounded by high hills and dense forests. About 350 years ago, a Ming Dynasty general fled Dongguan to evade the pursuing Qing Dynasty army and then settled down in what is now Shing Mun Country Park. He turned to piracy and had a fortress built, which was given the name Shing Mun (City Gate) Village. When the reservoir was built later it also adopted the name Shing Mun Reservoir, although the fortress village had long ceased to exist.

A Stroll Through The Woods

Winding its way through the dense forest about Pineapple Dam is the 800-metre-long Nature Education Trail, flanked by various species of plants labelled with their names and a brief introduction. At its end, the trail forks into two paths: one lines the rim of the Shing Mun Reservoir and the other leads to Tai Shing (Big City) Family Trail. The two paths converge at the Lek Kei Park. Half of the Tai Shing Family Trail lies in dense woods





where springs bubble and birds sing. A visit to a retreat like this effectively dispels the stresses and anxieties of busy city life.

Monkeys, the 'Good Listeners'

Lek Kei Park is a children's playground equipped with wooden benches in animal shapes, swings, scaffolding and ropes. Yet, the park is also a desired spot for elderly people to take a rest and chat. Monkeys can be seen gathering nearby and looking intently at the people as if they want to pick up something from human conversation.

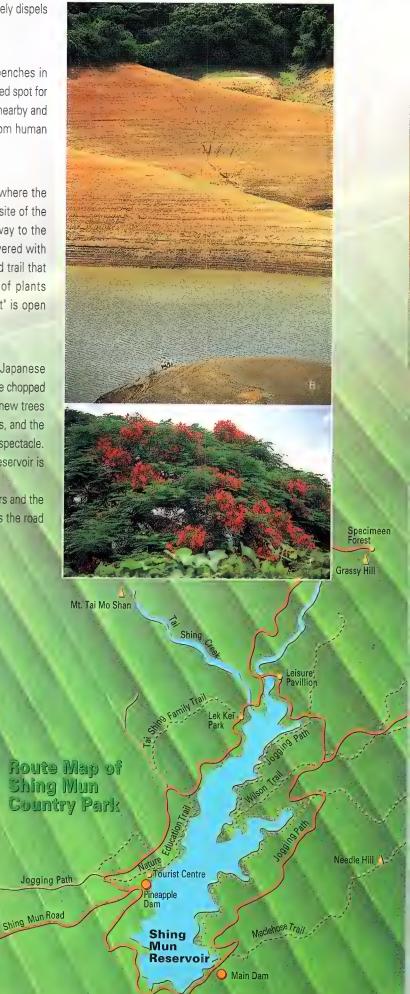
A Museum of the Vegetable Kingdom

Leisure Pavilion stands at the north end of Shing Mun Reservoir where the trail takes a U-turn along the east rim of the reservoir. The area is the site of the original Shing Mun Village which was relocated to Kam Tin to give way to the reservoir constructed in 1928. The area marked by the pavilion is covered with luxuriant greenery. Running past the pavilion and up a slope is a broad trail that leads to the "specimen forest" where more than 5,000 species of plants (including 37 varieties of bamboo) are grown. The "specimen forest" is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

A Reborn Forest

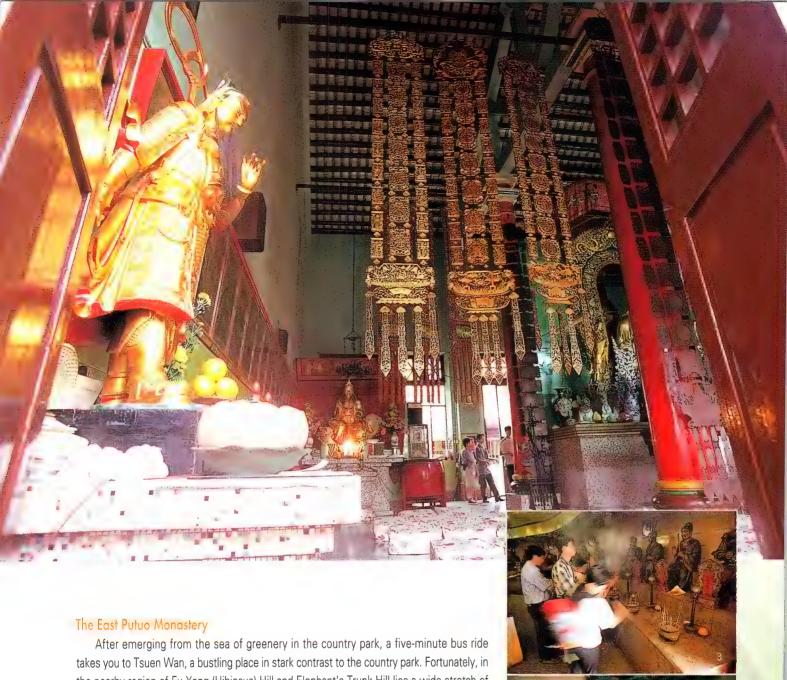
There used to be many giant old trees in the area. During the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong in World War II, a large number of the trees were chopped down for firewood and the area turned barren. After the end of the war, new trees of various species were planted. Today, they have grown into giant trees, and the forest at the east bank of the north end of the reservoir presents quite a spectacle. During the rainy seasons, the reflection of the dense forest in the full reservoir is also a sight to behold.

There are two paths leading back to the Pineapple Dam: a road for cars and the Wilson Trail, both running alongside the reservoir. The Wilson Trail meets the road at the main dam at the south end of the reservoir.





- 1,2,3. Shing Mun Country Park abounds in a variety of plants.
- 4. Leisure Pavilion is located on the original site of Shing Mun Village.
- 5. Elderly people chatting in Lek Kei Park
- 6. In the dry season, the Shing Mun Reservoir, seems surrounded by slopes of the Loess Plateau.
- 7. Dense vegetation greets visitors throughout the journey. (by Chapman Lee)
- 8. The exotic plants each grow in their own way.
- A quiet trail through the verdant bamboo aroves.



After emerging from the sea of greenery in the country park, a five-minute bus ride takes you to Tsuen Wan, a bustling place in stark contrast to the country park. Fortunately, in the nearby region of Fu Yong (Hibiscus) Hill and Elephant's Trunk Hill lies a wide stretch of tranquil land where Buddhist monasteries and Taoist temples are located. The sacred retreat serves as the back yard for the busy city of Tsuen Wan.

The most time-honoured of the religious establishments here is the East Putuo Monastery. Its architecture is so simple and plain that the monastery could have been easily mistaken for a local's house if it were not for a Buddhist mantra painted on its wall. Stepping inside, you will find yourself greeted by a strong smell of incense. The spacious monastery was once reputed for having housed a big tripod cauldron, a big statue of Buddha and a big pot.



The Yuen Yuen Institute

A 10 minutes' walk from the East Putuo Monastery brings you to the Yuen Yuen Institute, a large temple complex on a high hill slope dedicated to Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Inside the institute, the neatly arranged pavilions, waterside buildings, ponds and flower beds exude the charms of a classical Chinese garden. The institute is also famous for its vegetarian dishes.

The Bamboo Forest Monastery

Founded in 1927, the Buddhist monastery is not only the largest of the Buddhist monasteries on Hibiscus Hill but also one of the largest and most magnificent of its kind in Hong Kong. The monastery houses the giant statues of Triratna Buddha and the statue of Four-Faced Buddha from Thailand. Built in the temple are rockeries, fish ponds, pagodas and caves for the Goddess of Mercy and other Buddhas. A bamboo forest is also cultivated here. Beside the monastery, there are two other tranquil sacred places nearby: the Eastern Forest Buddhist Hall and Pipal Garden.

Translated by Winston Yau

- 1. The time-honoured East Putuo Monastery
- 2. The spacious and splendid Bamboo Forest Monastery
- 3. The Holy Religion Hall in the Yuen Yuen Institute is frequented by pilgrims.
- 4. Doves like to flock around the Daxiong Hall in the Yuen Yuen Institute.
- 5. The secular world viewed through the gateway of the Yuen Yuen Institute
- 6. The tasty vegetarian dishes served at Yuen Yuen Institute



TIPS FOR THE TRAVELLER

Traffic: Shing Mun Country Park can be reached by taking minibus No.82 on Siu Wo Street outside the Tsuen Wan MTR station and alighting at Pineapple Dam. Minibus No. 81 goes to East Putuo Monastery and Yuen Yuen Institute. Minibus No. 85 goes to Bamboo Forest Monastery.

Itinerary: Tsuen Wan → Shing Mun Country Park → Bamboo

Forest Monastery --- East Putuo Monastery, Yuen Yuen Institute.

Arrangement: Morning outing and picnic in Shing Mun Country Park; afternoon visit to Bomboo Forest Monastery, East Putuo Monastery and Yuen Yuen Institute where vegetarian dishes are served.

Conditions: Except for Tai Shing Family Trail that runs past slopes at 300 metres above sea level and another trail that leads through a primitive forest, other paths in Shing Mun Country Park are for cars and jogging. The journey round the Shing Mun Reservoir along the family trail and paths is about 10 kilometres long.

Note: Bring along food and drinks. The Tai Shing Family Trail running through the forest is infested with mosquitoes, so mosquito repellent is recommended.









Hainan Island

Taklimakan

In **Hainan Island**, many new tourist programmes are awaiting you. Staying at the palace-like Gloria Hotel in Yalong Bay, you can visit the underwater Dragon's Palace and bathe in hot springs.

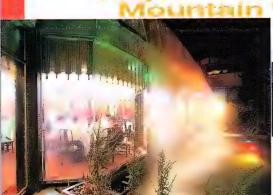
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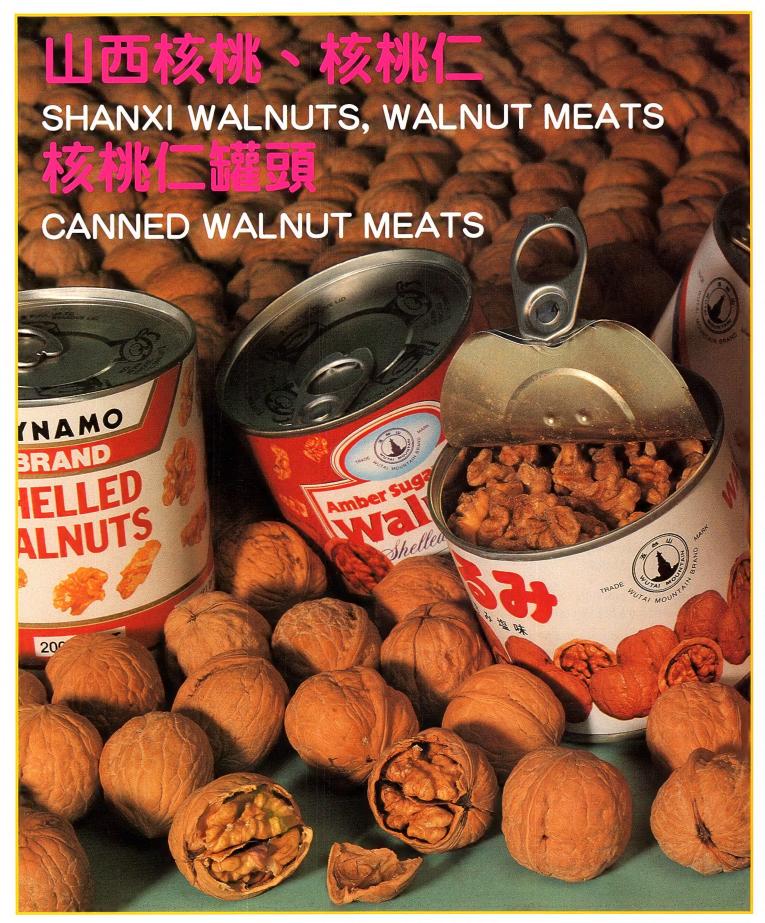
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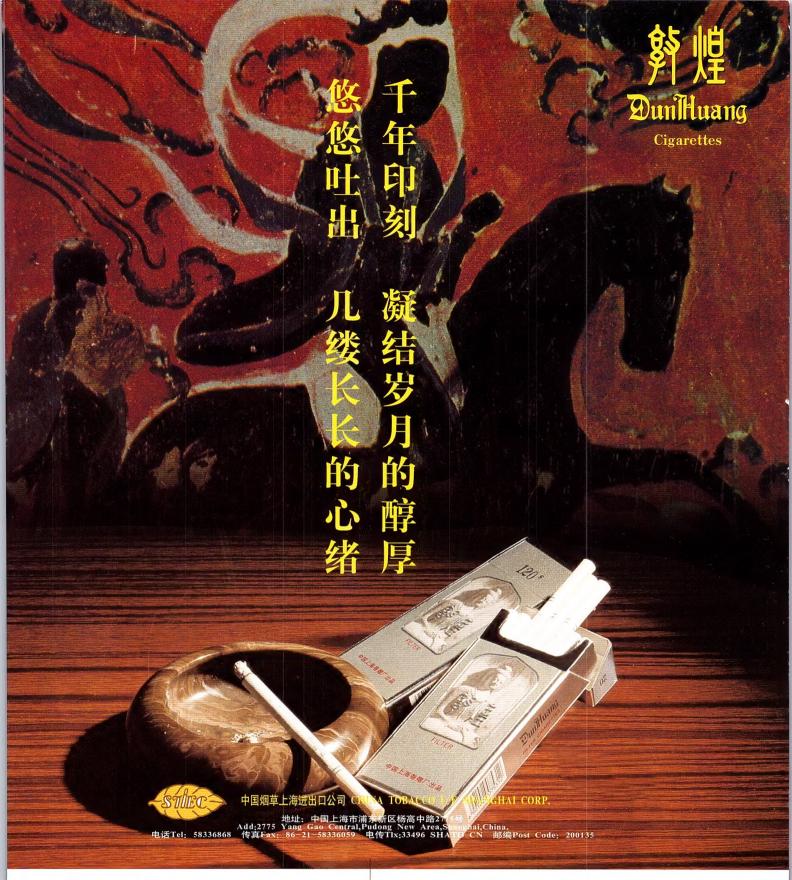
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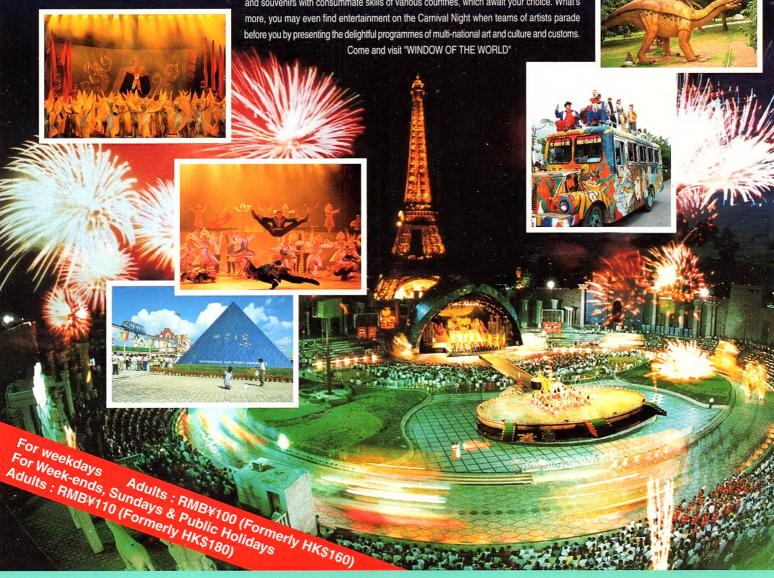


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